

NEW YORK, AUGUST 13, 1926

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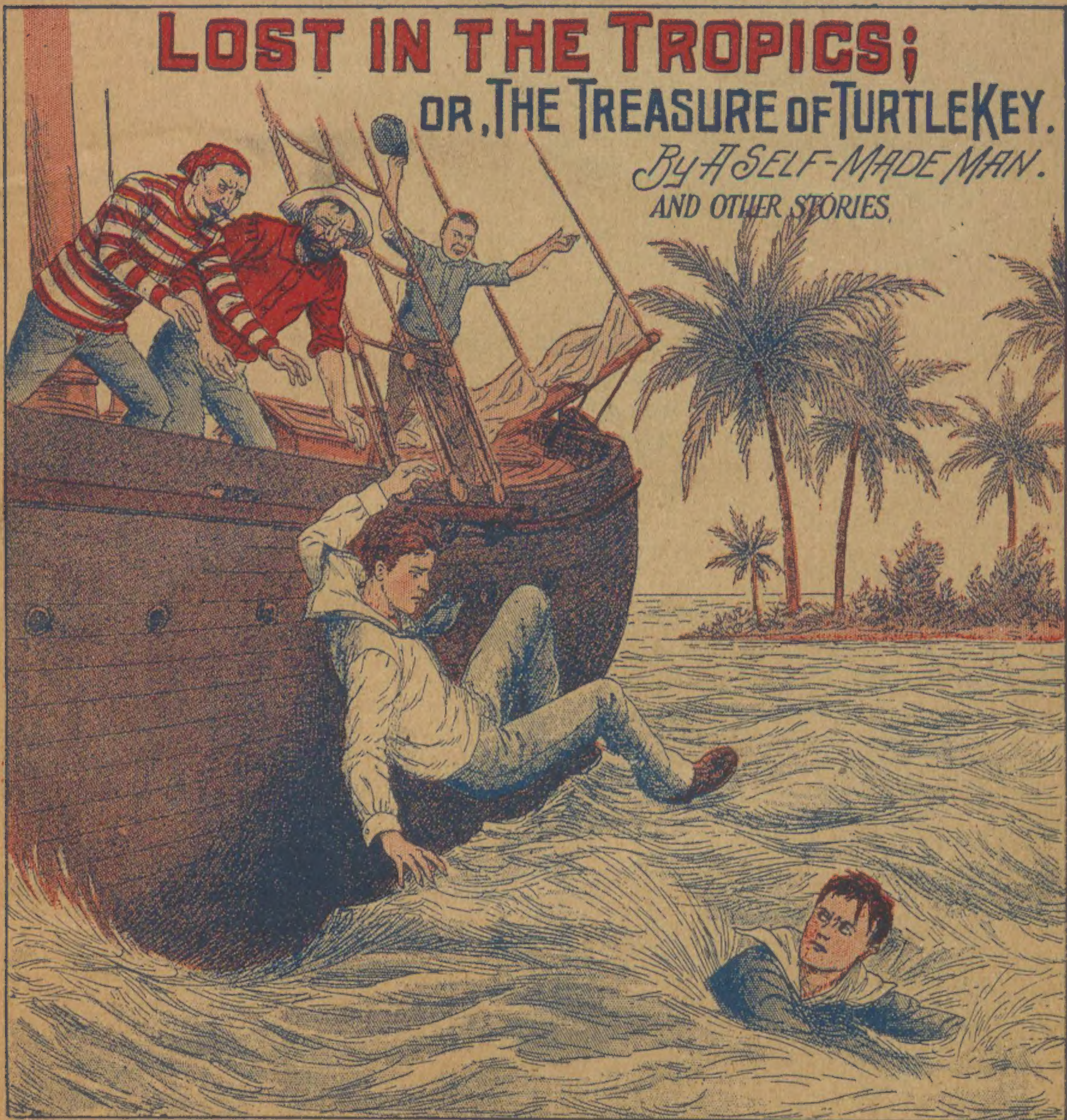
FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

LOST IN THE TROPICS;

OR, THE TREASURE OF TURTLE KEY.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.
AND OTHER STORIES



"Ovaire wiz you both!" cried Pierre Gerard, giving Dick and Sam a shove into the sea. "Now then, swim to ze island, mon enfants. By gar! You will be luckee if ze shark do not make a meal of you."

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LOST IN THE TROPICS

OR, THE TREASURE OF TURTLE KEY

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Runaways.

"I don't like the looks of this house, nor the people in it," said Dick Appleton in a low, guarded tone to his friend, Sam Atkins, as the two sat at a common deal table, close to a window overlooking a creek that jutted in from the Patapsco River, a number of miles south of the city of Baltimore. "I'm sorry we stopped here."

"It can't be helped now," replied Sam, with a furtive glance around at the hard-looking characters, all of them evidently sailors, who were drinking and smoking in pairs and groups at similar tables in the low-celled public room of a roadhouse, the name of which, displayed on a weather-beaten board over the door, outside, was the "Fisherman's Rest." "Any port in a storm, you know. It is the only house we've sighted in hours, and we're tired and hungry after our long walk. We've been on our feet since daylight, and I don't feel that I could stir another foot unless somebody urged me on with a hot poker. Then my stomach is that empty I could eat any old thing that looks like food."

"I'm pretty well petered out myself," replied Dick, "but just the same I wish we hadn't come here."

"What are you afraid of, anyway?" asked his companion. "It isn't like you to show the white feather. I never saw you do it at school, no matter what the odds were against you. Then, after planning our escape from the academy, look at the risk you took with the dog yesterday morning. He'd have made a mouthful of me if you had not come to my rescue and put him out of business. After that, nobody can tell me you've got a drop of cowardly blood in your veins."

"I'm not afraid to meet any trouble that comes my way but I don't believe in seeking it."

"Neither do I; but I don't see that we've courted any particular danger by coming in here. I'll admit the house looks tough; that the landlord looks like a prizefighter or something worse, and that the crowd here don't look like a Sunday-school class; but what of it? We're not so flush that we need fear being robbed."

"We've got ten dollars between us, and many a man has been murdered for much less than that. I've noticed since we've been sitting at this table, waiting for the landlord to fetch us some-

thing to eat, that the chaps in the room have been eyeing us in a peculiar manner."

"Why shouldn't they, seeing that we're strangers? Besides, our presence here in this out-of-the-way spot, hungry and footsore, must have struck them as rather odd. They heard you tell the landlord, in answer to his question, that we're on our way to Baltimore, and I'll bet few people, unless they're tramps, travel the Chesapeake shore on foot when there's a railroad only a few miles away that would save time and shoe leather at the rate of three cents a mile."

"It isn't anybody's business how we travel, or what road we take to reach our destination," replied Dick.

"That's right; but we can't prevent people being curious on the subject."

"It was necessary for us to take the most unfrequented and out-of-the-way road in order to throw our pursuers off the track."

Sam nodded.

"If we'd been caught and yanked back to the academy, Doctor Titus would have seen to it that we would not only have been punished severely, but that we wouldn't have had another chance to give the school the slip."

"I'm not sure that we're safe from capture yet. Doctor Titus may have notified the Baltimore police to be on the lookout for us."

"I'm willing to take my chance with the Baltimore police. We don't intend to remain long enough in the city for them to get a line on us. If they're watching for us, it is at the railroad station."

"They'll have a sweet time looking for us there," grinned Sam.

At that moment Dick raised his eyes, and met the fixed gaze of a low-browed, ugly-looking chap who sat by himself at a small table at the end of the small bar.

His scowling glance was so intent that it made the boy a bit uneasy. It was full of malicious satisfaction, as if the young visitors occupied a large share of his thoughts, and there was some definite purpose in his mind. Dick didn't relish the interest the fellow seemed to be taking in them.

He would have called Sam's attention to it, but was afraid his companion would turn around and look at the man.

Just then the landlord appeared from a passage

in the rear of the room with a tray containing two plates, knives and forks, a dish of cold meat, a platter of bread, some butter, and two cups of coffee. He unloaded these articles in front of the boys and walked over to the bar to wait on a customer who wanted some liquid refreshment.

The sight of the food cut short further conversation between the boys for the time being, and with one accord they transferred a portion of the meat to their plates and began to eat like very hungry lads indeed. Dick noticed that the ill-looking rascal scarcely took his eyes off them while they were eating. He had a bottle and a tumbler in front of him, and he drank of the contents of the former quite frequently. The rest of the crowd seemed to have got used to their presence, and ceased to pay any attention to them. The landlord, however, had his eyes on them a good part of the time, though the boys were not aware of that fact.

Dick and Sam devoured every scrap of meat and bread in sight and finished their coffee. Then they sat back in their chairs feeling much better. About this time a newcomer appeared on the scene. He wore a cap and a rough pea-jacket, had bushy side whiskers, and an authoritative air. He stepped up to the bar, called for whisky, and drank it down like so much water. After a brief conversation with the landlord he turned to the crowd and said in a hoarse, fog-horn voice:

"Come, my bullies, it's time you were shakin' a leg for the schooner. We drop down the creek in twenty minutes. D'ye understand?"

The men seemed to take his words in the light of an order that was to be obeyed. They arose from the table like a covey of birds startled by a hunter's gun, and started, with a kind of rolling gait, for the entrance.

The newcomer, who appeared to be the mate of the schooner, followed after the last man, and through the window at their elbows Dick and Sam saw the crowd making their way down a lane beside the creek. One man only, besides the landlord, remained in the public room. This was the surly-looking fellow who seemed to be so much interested in the two boys that they more than divided his attention with the rum bottle.

Presently the landlord went to the door, stepped outside, and walked over to a horse trough which was fed by a common iron pump set on top of a wooden base. He leaned against the pump, pipe in mouth, and after looking up and down the road, glanced steadily off toward a schooner that was hauled up alongside a small wharf in the creek about a quarter of a mile away. The boys looked in that direction, too, through the window, following the movements of the sailors who had just left the roadhouse. They were tumbling aboard the vessel while the mate paused on the wharf. Pretty soon the boys saw the schooner's jib begin to rise from her short bowsprit. At that moment they were startled by a hoarse, thick voice behind them.

"Well, my hearties, what be ye thinkin' o' doin'?" said the voice. "Slippin' yer cables for a trip aboard some ister [oyster] hooker on the bay, eh?"

The boys turned quickly, and were confronted by the burly form and leering countenance of the man who had sat by himself at the table near the

bar. His legs seemed to be a bit unsteady, for he held on to the table with one huge, sunburned paw, while the other grasped a mussed-up newspaper.

"No," replied Dick, giving him a steady look. "We're going to slip our cables for Baltimore after we have rested ourselves."

"Oh, ye are?" replied the man with a malevolent grin. "And what might ye intend to do there?"

"What business is that of yours?" asked Dick sharply, for now that they had but one man to deal with he didn't much mind what he said.

The fellow, instead of blazing up, as Dick more than half expected he would, gave utterance to a deep chuckle that seemed to come all the way from his stomach.

"I don't reckon ye'll go to Baltimore unless I go with yer."

"That so?" replied Dick sarcastically. "You seem to take a lot of interest in us."

"I do," grinned the man. "Ye're my meat, and I don't reckon I'll lose sight of ye till I hand ye over to the gent as is lookin' for yer."

"What's that?" fairly gasped Dick, while Sam's jaw dropped, and he looked bewildered.

"Ho! ho!" laughed the fellow. "Ye look all took aback, like some old hooker struck by a white squall."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Dick anxiously.

"I'm talkin' business, my hearties."

"Business! I don't know what you mean."

"Ye don't eh? That's what I mean. Read that."

The speaker slapped the newspaper, a copy of a Baltimore daily, down on the table before them, and pointed to an advertisement in a prominent column. It read as follows:

"REWARD!"

"Twenty-five dollars and expenses will be paid to any person who will bring back Dick Appleton (aged 18) and Sam Atkins (aged 17), runaways, to the Oriole Academy, Northview, Blank County, Maryland. Or fifteen dollars will be paid for information leading to the capture of the said boys.

"Theophilus Titus, A.M., L.D."

Then followed an accurate description of Dick and Sam.

"That fills the bill, don't it, my hearties?" chuckled the burly man.

The two boys were staggered. Although this was an unexpected shock, Dick did not intend that he and his companion should be checkmated by the half-drunken rascal before them.

"What have we got to do with this advertisement?" he demanded as coolly as he could.

"Now look ye, my hearty, to catch a weasel asleep ye've got to get up mighty early. Ye two are the lads that's mentioned in that there advertisement, and I mean to earn that twenty-five bones."

"How do you know we're the boys?" asked Dick, more to gain time to consider what he and Sam should do to extricate themselves from a bad predicament than because he cared what the fellow's answer would be.

"How do I know? I've got eyes in my head, and

I kin read what's as plain as the nose on yer face. As soon as I seen ye come in at that door I knowed ye was the two chaps what runned away from that school, so I made up my mind to nab ye."

He laid one hand on Sam's shoulder, and with the other reached for Dick. The boy sprang to his feet, put out one leg and tripped the unsteady rascal. He fell to the floor with a crash, his head striking on a heavy stone spittoon, which cut an ugly gash just over his left temple. Then he rolled over like a dead man, for not a limb moved, nor a muscle quivered.

CHAPTER II.—Drugged.

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Sam, with a thrill of horror. "You've killed him!"

"I hope not," said Dick, casting an uneasy look at the motionless man, particularly at the gash, which was bleeding freely. "I guess he's only unconscious."

"What are we going to do now? We're sure to be arrested for this, and then the game will be up," said Sam anxiously.

"Who's going to arrest us?"

"The landlord."

"The two of us ought to be a match for him."

"But there are others around the house who will help him."

"I'll admit we're in a bad pickle," replied Dick. "We'll have to make a bluff of some kind. Suppose we call the landlord and tell him that the fellow came over and attacked us, lost his footing, and fell against the spittoon. That's pretty near the truth, and looks reasonable."

"The fellow might come to while we're trying to explain matters to the landlord, and then he'd give us away as runaways. The landlord would stand in with him on the reward, and between the two of them our name would be mud."

"Have you any other plan to propose?"

"There's an open window yonder. I move that we get out that way and take to the woods," said Sam.

"All right," replied Dick. "Come on."

They moved toward the window, and Dick was in the act of getting out when the landlord suddenly entered the room. He gave an exclamation when he saw the unconscious and bleeding sailor on the floor. Then he saw the boys trying to take French leave of the premises.

"Hold on there!" he roared. "Where are you young rascals going?"

He rushed forward in time to pull Sam back into the room.

"Just going out into your yard, that's all," replied Dick.

"Are you sure you two wasn't trying to beat it and leave me in the lurch, after feeding you?" said the landlord, who really believed that was their object.

"No; but that chap yonder, when he attacked us, and fell down and bumped his head against the spittoon, scared us. We thought he might have had a fit and passed in his checks," said Dick.

"So he attacked you, did he?" said the landlord. "He must have been drunker than I thought he

was. No danger of Bill Spurgeon turning up his toes from a crack on the head. He's had many of them sort of things. Come over and we'll look at him."

The boys reluctantly followed the landlord, who took care to keep himself between them and the door. He declared that Spurgeon would be none the worse for the blow he had received when he got his senses back, and made the boys help him carry the man to the back part of the room and lay him on the floor.

"Now, my lads, I think you said you were bound for Baltimore," he said.

"We are," replied Dick.

"If you intend to continue your way on foot you'll never reach the city before midnight, even putting your best foot forward. You'd better stay here all night. I'll give you bed and grub for a dollar apiece. That's reasonable, ain't it?"

"All right," replied Dick promptly. "Here's the two cases in advance."

The landlord took the money, looked at it to make sure it was all right, and put it in his pocket.

"Will you go to your room now and tidy up a bit?" he said in a friendly manner.

Without waiting for an answer he grabbed Dick and Sam lightly by the arm and led them out into an adjoining entry, then upstairs to the second floor, which was the limit of the roadhouse in height.

It was not part of the boys' program to stop at this house all night. Indeed, they were both anxious to get on their way toward Baltimore as soon as possible. The landlord's manner was mildly insistent, however, as if he had taken upon his shoulders the direction of his young guests' affairs.

"This is a fine room for the money," he said, opening the door of a small chamber in which there was a very ordinary bed, two chairs, a washstand, and a shelf with a small looking-glass above it. The floor was covered with a dirty piece of rag carpet, while the mattress looked suspiciously thin.

"Just see if there's water in the bowl," added the landlord, giving them each a light shove into the room.

"Yes, there's water," replied Sam, taking a look.

"I'll let you know when supper is ready," said the landlord, abruptly shutting the door.

Alone in the room, the window of which overlooked the yard, the boys looked at each other. The same thought seemed to have occurred to both—that the landlord's actions were suspicious.

"Look here, Sam," said Dick, "I don't fancy this man's soft-soap way. There's something behind it, or I don't know what I'm talking about. Maybe he's seen the advertisement, too, and intends to try and make the twenty-five dollars himself."

"I wouldn't be surprised. Let's watch our chance and make a bolt," replied Sam.

Dick walked to the door and tried it.

"Just as I expected. It is locked."

"Locked!" gasped Sam.

"Yes."

"Then we're prisoners?"

"Looks that way."

"What are we going to do?"

"That's what we'll have to consider."

"In trying to give the half-drunken sailor the slip we've only jumped from the frying pan into the fire."

"We mustn't remain in the fire till we are burned."

"The question is, how are we going to make our escape?"

"It will soon be dark, then perhaps we can drop out through the window."

The boys looked out through the window and saw that a drop of less than fifteen feet would land them in the yard. Dick tried the lower sash, and found that nothing prevented its easy movement up and down.

"If the landlord intended to keep us prisoners in this room it's a wonder that he did not fasten this window beforehand," said Sam.

"He didn't have the chance to do anything like that when he locked us in here."

"Which is likely to prove a good thing for us."

"I hope so."

"He said he'd let us know when supper was ready, but I guess that was a bluff."

"He may bring our supper up here."

"I hope he will, for that lunch we had only took the edge off my appetite," said Sam.

"If he does, we mustn't let on that we suspect he is working against us. We must give him to understand that we are perfectly satisfied to remain here all night. By that means we may throw him off his guard, and he won't be so likely to watch us as closely as he otherwise would."

"You think he has seen that advertisement, recognized us, and intends to take us back to the academy and earn the twenty-five dollars?"

"Looks that way to me. That advertisement occupies a prominent place in the paper, and has been seen and commented on by several thousand people."

"I'll bet it has. Even if we get away from here we're likely to be identified along the road to Baltimore. Or if we reach Baltimore all right, some person in the city is likely to hold us up and turn us over to the police if they don't see their way clear to capturing us themselves. I think we'd better make a change in our arrangements and give Baltimore a wide berth."

"The only way we can reach the Eastern Shore, where you live, without tramping up to Wilmington—for it's risky to take a train—and then going down via Delaware, is by boat from Baltimore, thirty miles across the bay," said Dick.

"I suppose your stepfather knows by this time that you have hooked if from the academy."

"I think it likely that he does."

"What'll he do it if Doctor Titus fails to capture you?"

"Put a detective on my track, if he hasn't already done so."

"Can't you persuade him to send you to another school? I'll bet my father will do that when I get home and tell him all I've been up against at the Oriole Academy."

"No. He and Doctor Titus are old friends. That's why he sent me to that school. Anything the doctor says goes with him, while any kick I may make won't count."

"Then you really mean to go out West to your mother's sister?"

"That is my intention."

"Won't your stepfather suspect that, and send out there after you?"

"Probably he will, but I intend to fool him. I'm going to keep out of his way till I get to be twenty-one, and then he won't have authority over me any longer."

"I'm glad I haven't a stepfather," said Sam earnestly.

"You're lucky. Mine has had a grouch against me ever since my mother died."

"It's a wonder he's willing to spend money on your education."

"He can't help himself. Mother left a certain amount of her money by will for that purpose. Mr. Edwards, however, has the right to pick out the school; that is why he made it a point to send me to Doctor Titus. It always will be my opinion that he told the doctor to make me walk a chalk line."

"Which the doctor has done," grinned Sam.

"Bet your life he has! That's why I skipped out."

"He made it hard for me because I was your chum, and so we lit out together."

At that moment the boys heard the key click in the lock. The door opened, and the landlord entered with a tray of food.

"I thought I'd bring your supper up here, to save you the trouble of coming downstairs," he said with an unctuous grin, as he deposited the tray on the bed.

"Very kind of you," replied Dick sarcastically.

"When you get through you can shove the tray under the bed. I'll wake you in the morning about six, so you can make an early start for Baltimore," said the host, rubbing his fat hands together.

"All right," answered Dick. "As we're fagged out, we'll turn in as soon as we've polished the supper off. That ham and eggs looks good."

"It is good. I raise my own pork, and them eggs is fresh."

The boys believed him, and after watching them begin their meal the landlord withdrew and once more softly turned the key in the lock.

"He's a foxy old rooster," remarked Sam.

"That's what he is, but we're going to fool him just the same," replied Dick.

The boys, however, were ignorant of the trap that the astute landlord had laid for them. They ate their supper with great relish, and drank every drop of the coffee; then they shoved the tray under the bed.

"We'll wait half an hour, and then slip out of the window," said Dick.

"Gee! but I feel dead sleepy," said Sam inside of five minutes.

"So do I, but the fresh air will wake us up when we get outside."

Sam yawned, and his eyes looked as heavy as lead. Dick looked at him.

"Here! Don't go to sleep!" he said.

"Who's going—going to sleep?" returned Sam.

"You are. Gracious! I'll be off myself if I don't look out!"

The boy walked unsteadily to the window, threw up the sash and leaned out. For a moment the

cold night revived him, and he sat down on the chair.

"Sam!" he cried.

There was no answer from his companion.

"Sam!" repeated Dick, louder.

Still no reply.

"I believe he's—he's gone—gone—to—sleep."

He got up and looked over at Sam. The lad was stretched, unconscious, on the bed.

"He is a—— I wonder what's the mat—ter with me! I feel—feel just as if——"

He dropped back into his chair, stared at the ceiling a moment, and then his head fell over on his arm and he was fast asleep—as dead to the world as a log. The foxy landlord had drugged the two boys.

CHAPTER III.—Sent to Sea.

An hour later the door opened softly, and the landlord thrust his head into the room and flashed the lamp he carried in his hand about.

He saw the condition of the two boys, and a satisfied grin wrinkled his hard-looking face for a moment.

"It's all right," he said to some one behind him. "Come in and take a look at 'em. You'll find 'em stout lads, both of 'em. They'll make good hands aboard your brig."

The landlord entered the room, holding the lamp well up, and made way for the individual behind. He was a big, stout man, with mahogany-hued hands and face. His most conspicuous feature was a particularly large nose of a rubicund color, suggestive of close acquaintance with a gin bottle. Half a dozen excrescences ornamented its streaky surface, like good-sized warts, and rather added to its fiery aspect. A heavy growth of jet-black whiskers encircled his jaws from ear to ear, and as the hair was tough, like bristles, it gave him a fierce look.

His name was Jabez Caulder, and he was captain of the brig *Malta*, owned by a Baltimore shipping firm that was in the South American trade. He looked the boys over critically.

"They'll do," he said tersely. "I'll make sailors of 'em in short order, or shark's meat."

"They're worth \$30 each. You won't have to pay 'em any wages on the first trip out and back to Rio, where you're bound."

"Sixty dollars is a lot of money," replied Captain Caulder cautiously.

"Well, you can have Bill Spurgeon, who's an A.B., in with them for \$75. He's worth as much as both of these chaps."

As the skipper wanted Spurgeon bad, and couldn't get him without the connivance of the landlord, he agreed to the terms.

"I'll send a boat up the creek for the three in an hour," he said, walking out of the room.

"All right. We'll have a drink over it," replied the landlord.

The two men went downstairs. Captain Caulder paid the money over in the shape of a \$100 bill, receiving \$25 in change, and took a receipt. After the worthy pair had indulged in several drinks the skipper departed toward the creek, where a small boat awaited him.

An hour later four sailors appeared at the roadhouse and the landlord received and treated

them. Taking two of them to a small room on the ground floor, he pointed at Bill Spurgeon, who lay on a cot in his clothes, snoring like a house afire.

They took the sailor up between them and carried him out of the house. The landlord then took the other two men upstairs to the room where Dick and Sam lay, in blissful unconsciousness of the fate that was before them. One of the men grabbed Dick, the other Sam, and off they went with them. Bill Spurgeon was already in the bottom of the boat when the two sailors arrived with the boys. Dick and Sam were tossed with little ceremony into the boat, and the sailors, taking up the oars, rowed down the creek to the Patapsco River.

The shadowy outlines of the brig *Malta* lay before them, at anchor. Spurgeon and the boys were carried up her side and thence to the foul-smelling forecabin, where they were dumped into separate bunks.

There they were left to come to their senses at their leisure, while the brig was got under way, and was soon slipping down with the tide toward Chesapeake Bay. Reaching that big body of water, her nose was pointed southward, and she slipped down toward the broad Atlantic, about 170 miles away, under a light breeze. At eight o'clock next morning the brig was off the mouth of the Potomac River. Dick Appleton rolled over in his bunk, blinked up at the shaft of sunlight which shot down through the forecabin hatch, wondered at the strangeness of his surroundings, and then sat bolt upright and looked about him.

"Where the dickens am I?" he asked himself in great surprise. "This looks like the hold of a vessel. Why, it is a vessel! She's under way, too! Good gracious! What am I doing aboard of her?"

Then his gaze lighted on Sam, who was still snoring in the next bunk.

"Why, there's Sam! This is blamed funny."

Just then the mate of the brig came down into the forecabin to rouse up the new hands, who he thought had slept long enough. He carried a rope's-end in one hand. This article, which the man was in the habit of using on the persons of the sailors to "freshen their way," as he called it, had a hard knot at one end.

"Hello!" he said, stopping in front of Dick. "So you've come to? Just bundle yourself on deck, and be spry about it!"

"Bundle myself on deck?" repeated Dick. "How came I here?"

"I didn't come down here to answer questions, my hearty. Start yourself!"

Dick judged by the glint in the man's eye, as well as the rope's-end in his hand, that it would be the part of prudence to obey orders, so he jumped out of the bunk and walked over to the short ladder that led on deck. As he put his foot on the ladder he heard a dull thud as the mate brought the knotted end of the rope down on Sam's back, and this was instantly followed by a howl of pain from Sam as he started up and looked at his aggressor.

"Get a move on!" thundered the mate, administering another whack that brought a second cry from the boy.

Sam didn't understand the situation even a lit-

tle bit. He didn't know where he was, nor, why he should be assaulted in such an unprovoked and savage manner. He was not a boy to take a beating from anybody without cause, and he was sure that he did not deserve a whaling at that moment. The result was he resented it, and his resentment took the form of a blow straight from the shoulder, which lighted on the mate's nose, knocking the astonished man over as clean as a whistle. Sam then sprang to his feet, ready to defend himself. The mate jumped to his feet **boiling over with fury. Sam's fist was hard, because he was accustomed to bag-punching in the academy gymnasium, and the man had felt it. The blow had started blood, too.**

"You young sculpin!" roared the mate. "You shall pay dearly for that! I'll cut you into ribbons before I'm done with you!"

"I don't think you will," replied Sam coolly. "I'd like to know what you mean by jumping on me without cause."

"I'll show you what I mean!" cried the man, springing at him with the rope's-end swung aloft, ready for business, and ugly business, too.

Dick, who had paused with one foot on the lowest step of the ladder, saw the danger that threatened his chum. As the two boys had always stuck by one another through thick and thin, he darted to his friend's aid. He caught the mate's descending arm and arrested the blow. The man turned and glared savagely at him.

"Why, you measly little rat, are you butting in? You shall have a taste of the same medicine!"

He swung around to strike Dick, when Sam grabbed his arm this time. The mate fairly sputtered in his fury. The language he used made the air blue. He struck out at Sam with his huge, hairy, tanned fist, but Sam ducked like lightning, and the mate spun around from the wasted force of the blow. As soon as he steadied himself he grabbed Sam by the shoulder and brought the rope down on his back. The boy roared and jabbed him in the eye, while Dick, now pretty mad, struck him in the jaw. A furious scrawl ensued, during which Sam was knocked like a shuttlecock into his bunk, and then the mate attempted to annihilate Dick the same way.

Dick, however, was so lucky as to plant a heavy short-arm upper cut on the point of the officer's chin, and he went down and out.

CHAPTER IV.—Up Against a Hard Fate.

As the mate went down on the floor, completely dazed, Sam recovered himself.

"What in thunderation does this all mean, Dick?" asked the somewhat bewildered Sam. "Where are we at? This isn't the room in the roadhouse where we were at my last recollection."

"Blessed if I know what it does mean," replied Dick. "We're aboard some vessel, that's clear enough, and the vessel is in motion."

"I don't remember coming aboard any vessel," replied Sam.

"Nor I. We must have been carried aboard while we slept."

"If that is so, then that blamed landlord is at the bottom of the matter."

"I don't see how we could be carried aboard this vessel without waking up and finding it out."

"I don't see how we could, either; but here we are, notwithstanding. I wonder who that fellow is we knocked out? If he's the captain, we shall catch it hot when he comes to his senses. You must have hit him a good one."

"I guess I did. Look at my knuckles. He's coming around now. Let's get out of here before he sees us."

Dick ran nimbly up the ladder, followed by Sam. They found themselves standing on the raised roof of the forecabin, facing the long, narrow deck that ran as far as the cabin. Perhaps eight sailors were scattered about, engaged in various light duties. The brig was under full sail, wafted along by a smacking breeze. On the port side loomed Tangier Island, off the Maryland shore. On the starboard side lay the beach of Northumberland County, Virginia. The *Malta* was an old, weather-beaten hooker that had faced the storms and surges of many ocean trips, and she did not look at all inviting. She sat deep in the water, too, for she was heavily laden with agricultural implements and other machinery for Rio de Janeiro.

"Better stir your stumps, my lads," said a good-natured looking seaman, passing below them at the moment. "I guess the cap'n's waitin' fer you aft. There he is yonder, standing at the break of the poop. He wouldn't mind throwin' a belayin'-pin at your heads if you put him out. Better hustle aft at once."

"Come on, Sam," said Dick. "Perhaps the captain will explain things. There is certainly some mistake about our being here."

Dick sprang down on deck by way of the short ladder in front of the forecabin hatch, and started aft, with Sam at his heels.

Captain Caulder had his eyes on them as they advanced.

"Now you young lubbers," he said, with one of his customary imprecations, "you know you're shipped as landsmen, and the quicker you shake yourselves into place the better it will be for you both. I'm a man of few words, recollect that, you pesky varmint. When I say a thing I mean it, and if you don't obey quicker than greased electricity ye'll wish you had never been born."

"Why, we haven't shipped on this vessel," replied Dick. "We're not sailors."

"What's that? Tell me I lie, do you? I say you have shipped. If you open your jaws again I'll come down there and knock the daylights out of you both."

The captain's attitude was so aggressive that Dick kept quiet.

"Where's Mr. Nutter?" snorted the skipper.

"Who's he?" asked Dick.

"The mate who routed you out o' the fo'cas'l, you lubber!"

"We left him there."

"He seems to be takin' his time," snarled the captain.

At that moment the mate was seen driving Bill Spurgeon out of the forecabin hatch with the rope's-end. Apparently he was taking satisfaction out of the sailor for the damage the boys had done him, and Spurgeon knew better than to resent the attack. The mate drove the sailor aft, and when he came within reach of Dick and Sam

he struck each of them a heavy blow with the knotted rope. To the astonishment of both Spurgeon and the skipper, the boys sprang at the mate like young catamounts, and he had all he could do to defend himself. Captain Caulder called two seamen up to seize the boys. While the sailors held Dick and Sam the furious mate gave them a tremendous drubbing with the rope, until the boys fell, moaning and fainting, to the deck.

"Get up!" roared the mate.

He gave each a tremendous blow on the back. This was the last straw to their endurance, and both boys rolled over insensible. When Dick recovered his senses again the brig was much further down the bay. He found himself lying, sore and bruised, in a bunk in the forecastle. Sam was lying in the next bunk, also sore and bruised, but not yet conscious. Dick, as he lay there, thinking, realized that he and his chum were up against it pretty hard. It was clear to him now that they had put their foot in it when they stopped at the Fisherman's Rest roadhouse. The landlord had worked some hocus-pocus game upon them that had resulted in their transfer from the second-story room to the forecastle of the brig. Just how this matter had been effected Dick was unable to guess, but it had been put through, and they would have to grin and bear their hard luck, or take more thumping from the knotted end of the rope. While Dick was figuring things up Sam recovered his senses.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "Talk about being as sore as a boil—I'm sore as two boils!"

"Hello, Sam! Have you come to life?" asked Dick.

"That you, Dick? Have I come to life? I believe I'd feel better if I was dead. How do you feel?"

"Let's talk about something pleasanter. Sit up and let's see what we're going to do."

With many groans and wry faces, Sam sat up in his bunk, with his feet outside.

"This scrape is worse by a whole lot than being at the academy," said Sam.

"I'll admit it is, though we did think that was about the worst ever."

"That was because we didn't know any better. Now we're where we can't run away, unless we jump overboard, and we're too far from shore to make it by swimming."

"I'd like to know where the vessel is bound. Maybe we're on the way to Europe."

"Oh, Lord! We'll be done up before we get half way there."

"We will if we get many more beatings like we had today."

While they were talking the forecastle hatch was darkened by the form of one of the crew coming down. This individual proved to be Bill Spurgeon. He came over and looked at the boys with a long-drawn chuckle.

"Well, my hearties, how do you feel?"

"How do you suppose we feel?" replied Dick sourly.

"I reckon ye feel kinder sore and bunged up. It'll be a lesson to ye not to strike an officer ag'in. It's a wonder he didn't kill ye. I've known of many a man who made food for sharks for less than that. Ye got off lucky, I kin tell ye."

"How came you aboard this ship?"

"It isn't a ship, sonny, but a brig—the brig Malta, Cap'n Caulder."

"Where is she going?"

"She's bound for Rio."

"Do you mean Rio de Janeiro?"

"That's just what I mean, but it's always called Rio."

"You didn't say how you came aboard."

"I was shanghaied, like yourselves."

"What's shanghaied?"

"Doped, and put aboard an outward bound hooker."

"Doped! That means drugged."

Bill Spurgeon nodded.

"Didn't you make a kick?"

"What's the use? If I had opened my jaw I'd have got the soft end of a belayin'-pin alongside the head. When I found how things stood I jest said nothin' and made the best of a bad job. If ye'd acted sensible, ye wouldn't have got licked. I heard the mate say he'd pickle ye when ye come on deck again, if ye opened yer traps to him. A nod ought to be as good as a wink to a blind horse; so if ye're wise ye'll take the hint. As ye've got to learn the business, ye must expect more kicks than ha-pence. Ye can't escape 'em, fer ye're bound to do things wrong till ye larn how to do 'em right. Ye're in the mate's bad book, and ye don't stand well with the skipper, either. I don't envy ye much. If ye don't jump overboard afore ye reach Rio ye'll be lucky."

With that comforting remark Bill Spurgeon left them. Shortly afterward one of the regularly shipped men came down the ladder.

"Don't you want your dinner, my lads?" he asked.

At those words Dick and Sam realized that they were hungry. They had not had any breakfast, and it was now a bit past midday.

"Where do we get dinner?" asked Dick, who, like Sam, was ignorant of ship usage.

"At the galley."

"Where is the galley?"

"You are a pair of lubbers for a fact. Follow me and I'll show you."

It required considerable of an effort for Dick and Sam to follow the seaman out of the fore-castle. But they managed to reach the galley, where the cook provided them with a meal. After they had eaten it they limped back to the fore-castle, and were not disturbed for the rest of the day. At dark the brig was off the capes, headed out to sea, with the lights of Old Point Comfort miles away on her starboard counter.

CHAPTER V.—Left to Their Fate.

Next morning, when the mate came down into the fore-castle to rout the boys out he found them both seasick. Seeing that they would be thoroughly useless, and only in the way on deck in their present condition, the mate left them and reported the bad shape they were in to Captain Caulder. The skipper swore some, but as the brig was in the grasp of a small gale, he soon forgot about the boys. It blew hard all day, and the brig pitched and rolled like a chip at the mercy of the waves. Dick and Sam lay in their bunks, pictures of misery. Nobody bothered about them, except Bill Spurgeon. He jeered at them, and

gloated over their unhappy state. They paid no attention to him, and so the day passed. Next morning the gale had blown itself out, though the sea was running high. The mate came down and hustled them out of their bunks with blows and imprecations. They crawled on deck, looking more dead than alive, but the sea air made them feel a bit better, though they staggered around feeling as weak as cats. The mate fitted them out with sea-going togs from the slop chest, took Dick into his watch, and turned Sam over to the second mate. In spite of the miserable shape they were in they were forced to hustle, and by degrees their sickness left them and they were able to eat a fairly hearty supper.

For three days the weather held fine, and the boys were gradually broken into routine life aboard the brig. The mate, however, never lost a chance to lay his rope's-end on their backs, or about their legs. He was taking his revenge on them for the blows they had given him that first morning. On the afternoon of the fourth day, as the brig was approaching the Bahama Islands, the weather turned bad, and the barometer gave notice of a coming storm. Sail was greatly reduced on the vessel, and ere long the first of the gale struck her and she began to plunge about on the waves like a restless colt. As the afternoon advanced the gale grew worse and worse. After the men had had their supper life lines were stretched across the deck to save the sailors from being carried overboard by the intruding water.

Along about dark a tremendous wave struck the port bulwarks a terrible blow and carried away a good portion of the woodwork, which was weak, and almost rotten in places. That gave a better opening for the water to sweep the deck, and from that time on it was nearly always awash. Both watches being required to be on deck to handle the brig under the strenuous circumstances, Dick and Sam came together, and took refuge under the shadow of the poop, where they clung desperately to one of the life lines whenever the waves came aboard, which was every minute or so.

"Say! this is fierce, Dick!" shouted Sam in his companion's ear, for such was the uproar of the tempest that ordinary tones could not be heard even at the closest range. "Do you think we'll come out of this alive?"

"It doesn't look as if we would," replied Dick; "but I can't tell whether we're in danger or not. Every time the brig makes a plunge I've been expecting to see her keep right on under, which would mean the last of us. Yet she comes up again, shaking the water from her bows, like a dripping dog. I'd give something to be back again in Oriole Academy, even if I had to go on a diet of bread and water for a month."

"How d'ye like it, my hearties?" cried a hoarse voice in their ears, as Bill Spurgeon joined them.

"We don't like it a little bit," replied Dick.

"Ho! ho! ho!" croaked the sailor.

"This is the worst storm I ever saw in my life," said Sam.

"This is only a capful of wind," chuckled Spurgeon. "Jest wait till ye see a real storm."

Every moment the storm seemed to increase in violence. The wind shrieked, roared and howled like the outburst of a million airy fiends. What little canvas had been left exposed aloft was torn from the bolt ropes, leaving only tattered strips

fluttering from the yards. The brig plunged and rolled in what seemed a frightful manner to the boys, who believed that they never would see daylight again. They were wet to the skin, and shivered under the chilliness of the blast. Thus hours passed away, and the Malta still blundered on her course. Suddenly the wind veered around to another quarter as the first streaks of dawn appeared in the east. It didn't come as heavy as before, but it created a nasty cross sea that made the vessel roll worse than ever. Another hour passed, and it was clear that the gale had blown itself out. Daylight showed the destruction the storm had wrought in the brig. Sails in rags, cordage hanging broken from the masts, the port bulwarks badly smashed, and the deck covered with the debris.

"Now, my lads, up aloft!" cried the captain. "We'll have that main-to'-gallan' spar down. I can see it's sprung from here."

Most of the hands sprang aloft, several to attend to the sprung spar, the others with their knives ready to cut away the ragged canvas, after which they began splicing the snapped cordage. Dick and Sam were ordered to unship the life lines and clear the deck of the rubbish. While the brig presented a busy scene fore and aft, the captain called the chief mate and ordered him to sound the well. This was a necessary precaution after such a heavy blow, especially with such an old craft as the Malta. The mate was not away long. When he returned to the poop he said to the captain in a low tone:

"Six foot of water below, and gaining fast. She's leaking like a sieve!"

Bill Spurgeon was close behind the two men and heard what the mate said. He seemed panic-stricken. Rushing to the poop-rail, he roared out:

"Boats out, lads! The hooker is sinkin' under us!"

His stentorian, panic-breeding shout rang like a trumpet call above the whistling wind and rasping cordage. With shouts of terror and dismay, the men aloft quit work on the instant and slid down the shrouds to the deck, while those on deck, with one accord, made a rush for the nearest boat.

"You infernal rascal!" roared the skipper, striking Spurgeon a blow that sent him headforemost from the poop-rail to the deck, where for a few moments he lay dazed.

To his chief mate he said:

"Tell off four hands to work the pumps, and drive the others back to their duties."

The mate hastened to obey these orders, but the men received them in sulky defiance, declaring that they were not going to go down with the cranky old hooker. When the skipper saw these tokens of mutiny he sent the second officer for his revolvers. As soon as they were in his hands he jumped down, and rushing to the starboard boats, which the men were endeavoring to lower, ordered the sailors to haul off. A low, ominous growl came from the men, and not one budged. Captain Caulder forced his way to the nearest davit, and seizing the tackle, cried:

"Back, men! To the pumps! The brig can be saved!"

"Go and man the pumps yourself!" shouted Bill Spurgeon, who, having regained his feet, had sprung over to the side of the demoralized crew.

"You mutinous dog!" hissed the skipper. "Am I not captain of this brig?"

"Of course ye are; and ye kin go down with her, if ye choose." Then turning to the men, he cried: "To the port boats, my lads! We ain't got on time to lose. The brig is sinkin' right under us every minute!"

"Stop!" roared Captain Caulder, as the crew started to follow Spurgeon.

Instinctively the men obeyed, standing in hesitating and sullen defiance.

"Villain! I'll have you put in irons!" roared the captain.

Spurgeon laughed derisively.

"Come on, lads, follow me!"

As the men made a movement toward the port side the skipper yelled:

"I'll shoot the first man that makes for the boats!"

"Then shoot me!" sneered Spurgeon, starting to cross the deck.

Crack! Captain Caulder had taken a hasty aim at the rebellious sailor and fired. The bullet missed its mark, but entered the brain of a man close by, who, with a wild shriek, staggered back and fell to the deck dead. The shot enraged the men.

"Down with the cap'n!" roared Spurgeon. "He has murdered Tom Jones!"

With howls of rage the men rushed at the skipper. Crack! crack! crack! spoke his weapon. There was the sound of blows, then the captain's body rose in the air and was flung into the sea. The chief mate was pummeled into insensibility and left in the scupper. The second mate was prevented from interfering.

"To the boats, lads! To the boats, for your lives!" shouted Spurgeon. "I'm cap'n now! Get water and provisions from the galley, not forgettin' a demijohn of rum! Now, then, work lively! The old hooker may go down any minute!"

The men scattered and got busy. Dick and Sam had taken no part in the proceedings, but remained aloof, staggered by the desperate look of things. They sympathized with the men, for they had received only abuse from the skipper and his chief officer since they were brought aboard the vessel. The overthrow of the captain and mate put an end to all discipline. While some of the men, under the leadership of Spurgeon, got two boats ready for launching, the rest brought water and provisions to put into them. Inside of ten minutes the boats were ready for launching, and were then lowered away. The moment they struck the water the crew swarmed into them. Dick and Sam brought up in the rear of the men who were tumbling into Spurgeon's boat. As they essayed to follow, the rascal's sharp eyes singled them out.

"Back! back! ye young sculpins! We've got too many aboard now! Lower one of the port boats fer yerselves, and be hanged to ye!"

As he spoke he lifted the oar he was using in fending off, and struck the boys on the chest with it, sweeping them from the bulwarks to the deck. Wild with terror at the idea of being left behind on the sinking brig, Dick and Sam scrambled back on to the bulwarks. By that time the two boats, loaded with the crew, were a dozen feet away from the vessel's side and rapidly increasing the distance.

"Help! Save us!" cried Sam frantically.

The only reply was a mocking laugh from Bill Spurgeon, coupled with an invitation to go to blazes.

CHAPTER VI.—Lost in the Tropics.

"Oh, Lord! What are we going to do?" gurgled Sam, watching the retreating boats with staring eyes.

Dick, like his chum, had too little sea experience to know what to do under the terrible circumstances. Both clung to the bulwarks with a despairing grip, rising into the air one moment and descending toward the water the next, as the brig rolled to port and then back again to starboard. The second mate had been taken off in one of the boats, but the chief officer lay where the rascals had thrown him down in the starboard scupper.

"We'll be drowned like rats in a trap!" groaned Sam. "The cowardly villains! to leave us to perish out here in midocean! It's an outrage!"

"Let's see if we can't lower one of the remaining boats," said Dick. "We must do something to get away from this sinking craft."

He sprang to the deck, and Sam followed him. Rushing over to one of the port boats, they discovered, to their dismay, that a big hole was stove in the bottom. The other boat seemed all right, but on trying to unship the tackle they found the ropes so jammed that they could do nothing with them.

"That settles it! We're doomed!" said Sam despairingly.

"Hold on! There's a small boat lashed on the roof of the galley," said Dick. "We will get that down and shove it overboard through the break in the port bulwarks."

Dick led the way to the top of the galley house, and with their knives the boys hacked away at the strong, tarry lashings that held the little craft tight to the roof fore and aft. At last the lashings were cut through and they lowered the boat to the deck. They released the oars, and then set about getting some water and provisions. The crew had almost cleaned out the pantry, so that there was little left for them. They filled half a dozen empty bottles, and a can or two, with water from the cask outside the galley, and that was the best they could do in that direction.

"Now we've got to get her into the water," said Dick. "That's a ticklish job for us. If we don't do it at the right moment, when the brig dips to port, we'll upset her, and lose the little food and water we have aboard."

"Hello!" exclaimed Sam at that moment. "Who's that lying in the scupper?"

Dick looked where his companion pointed, and saw the form of a man doubled up close to the starboard bulwark. He seemed to be dead, but they were not sure of that.

"It's one of the mates," said Dick, starting over to the spot.

"It's the chief mate, then, for I saw Mr. Brewer in one of the boats as they left us in the lurch," said Sam.

It was the chief mate, as the reader knows, and the boys recognized him as soon as they reached his side.

"He's alive," said Dick. "We can't leave him."

to drown on the brig. Help me carry him over to the boat."

Sam grabbed the mate by one arm, while Dick seized him by the other. Between them they dragged the unconscious man across the deck to the spot where the boat lay. Placing him in the boat, with his legs under one of the seats so as to hold him steady, they shoved the boat close to one of the bulwark openings. After watching the rise and fall of the brig, whose movements were now extremely sluggish, for she was dangerously full of water by this time, and noting the exact moment when the boat ought to be launched, they finally shoved it into the sea. To their great satisfaction, the launching was successful. The next time the brig dipped to port they sprang into the little craft, and, grabbing the oars, rowed away from the doomed craft.

"We didn't get away from her any too quick," said Dick, as they paused some yards away and looked back. "Look how low she is in the water! I don't see how she floats! I think we can bless our stars that we were able to get away as soon as we did."

A low, rumbling noise reached their ears at that moment. This was followed by a loud explosion as the compressed air 'tween decks blew off the battened-down main hatch. It was this air, which, acting like the gas in a balloon, had materially helped in keeping the heavily laden brig afloat. With its escape the vessel's bows arose high in the air, then she dove forward, like a porpoise taking a header, and sank slowly out of sight into the depths of the ocean. With the brig gone, nothing greeted their eyes but a vast expanse of blue, rolling water on every side. As far as they could see, they were alone on the boundless deep. The boys had not the slightest idea where they were, but as a matter of fact they were in tropical waters, a few miles to the northward of the long string of islands known as the Bahama group.

"How shall we head?" asked Sam.

"We'll keep her head up to the wind. In fact, we've got to do that, or take the risk of being capsized," replied Dick.

"I wonder where the other boats are?"

"Miles away by this time."

"I suppose we can count on being picked up by some vessel?"

"I hope so; but a vessel might pass close to this spot without anyone on board making out this small boat. We are only a speck on the ocean, and specks don't count for much in such a tremendous space of water."

"Oh, Lord! You give me the chills!" faltered Sam.

"While I row just dash some water in the mate's face and try to bring him to," said Dick.

Sam proceeded to do as he was requested, but he found it impossible to arouse consciousness in the man.

"He look to me as if he wasn't going to live," said Sam at length, desisting from his efforts. "He's breathing, but that is about all."

"The crew must have pounded him bad when they jumped on Captain Caulder."

"They certainly did. I guess they hardly realized what they were about; otherwise, I don't think they would have thrown the skipper overboard."

"The shooting of Tom Jones did the business.

The sailors were in a bad temper, and that exasperated them beyond control."

"The skipper was a hard case. He handled us without gloves, and so did this man. If we hadn't minded our p's and q's very close, it is hard to say what they might not have done to us. I'll never forget that cowardly beating this chap gave us the first morning while we were held by the sailors. It makes my blood boil to think of it. If I'd been free, and had had a weapon, I believe I'd have tried to kill him. He's a brute, and he'd been served rightly if he went down with the brig."

"Well, we didn't let him go down with the vessel. It's better to return good for evil in this world. A fellow always feels better if he can heap coals of fire on his enemy's head, as the Bible has it."

"I guess you're more forgiving than me. I doubt if I'd have taken him off had I been alone."

"You probably wouldn't have been able to."

The sun rose higher and higher in the heavens, and the boys soon became sensible of its heat. The clouds that had covered the sky at dawn were now gone, and Old Sol had full swing. The sea, however, seemed as rough as ever. The waves were sweeping the little boat southward, though the boys were not cognizant of that fact. It wasn't long before hunger and thirst made the boys aware that they had eaten nothing since the night before. Accordingly they sampled their stock of provisions, drinking sparingly of the water, for they had but a scanty supply. The day seemed unusually long to them, but it came to an end at last. Sam made two other attempts to revive the mate, but the man, unknown to them, was suffering from a fracture near the base of the brain, resulting from a blow one of the infuriated sailors had given him with an iron belaying-pin, and it was only a question of time when death would intervene. Had daylight lasted another hour the boys would have sighted a low-lying tropical island that lay directly in their path.

The waves had gone down a great deal by sunset, and the boys congratulated themselves over the prospect of a smooth ocean on the following day, together with the chance of a possible rescue, for hope springs up continually in the human breast, no matter how discouraging the outlook may be. As the night progressed conversation flagged, and the boys reclined, half asleep, in rather uncomfortable attitudes. Unknown to them, they were drawing nearer and nearer to the tropical island. Suddenly the boat was caught in the grasp of a breaker, rushed swiftly forward, lifted into the air, and turned over, dumping the boys most unexpectedly into the sea.

CHAPTER VII.—Ashore on Turtle Key.

Dick and Sam were dazed by their unlooked-for plunge into the sea, and their senses were still further bewildered by the rolling over they got in the surf. Before they realized that they had been cast upon a shore unknown to them, back they, the boat, and the body of the almost dead mate, were drawn by a powerful influence they could no more resist than they could fly. Before they had gone far, an intruding wave captured and bore

them islandward again. They were tossed through the surf this time like a couple of pebbles and rolled some way up the beach. Feeling solid ground under them, they instinctively dug their hands and feet into the sand, and the water receded without them. They lay there, panting, and wondering where they were. The next wave was a short one, that rolled all about them, but had no power to dislodge them. Another big wave was coming, when Dick scrambled up, and seizing Sam by the arm, dragged him several yards up the shelving shore. Sam spat out a mouthful of moist sand and sea-water and sat up.

"What the dickens has happened to us?" he sputtered.

"We've gone ashore somewhere," replied Dick.

"Where's the boat?"

"Blessed if I know where it is!"

"I wonder what land this is? I thought we were in the middle of the ocean, miles away from any land!"

"That was my idea, too," replied Dick. "We must be ashore somewhere along the coast of the United States."

"Then we're as good as saved, after all," said Sam, feeling quite encouraged. "See any lights anywhere?"

"Nary a light. I can see some funny-looking trees—all stem, with leafy tops."

"Oh, shoot the trees! What I'd like to see is a house."

"Get up! We'll walk higher up the beach, and see what we can make out."

Sam arose with alacrity.

"It's blamed funny we should strike the shore so soon. When the sun went down, not so many hours ago, there wasn't anything in sight but water. I was sick of looking at it, for we've seen nothing else since the brig went down."

"Well, it is singular, I'm bound to admit. Hello! There's a whole lot of water yonder. Say! this must be an island we've struck, and not the States at all!"

"That doesn't follow. This may be a long tongue of land extending out into the sea."

"These trees look like tropical ones," said Dick, pointing to half a dozen plantains that stood like a row of sentinels in front of them.

"If it's an island, there may be nobody on it, and then we'll stand a good chance of starving to death, for our provisions and water have gone with the boat."

"Don't begin looking for trouble right off, old man. I'd rather feel solid ground under me than be floating about in that boat on a wide sea. At any rate, while life lasts there's hope, so pin your faith to that," replied Dick cheerfully.

Although they were soaked to the skin, they did not feel so very uncomfortable owing to the warmth of the tropical night air. Besides, while they kept in motion the exercise sent the warm blood coursing through their vein, and overcame any sense of chilliness. Presently a thick growth of banana trees barred their further progress. Walking along the edge of the grove, with the wide, sandy shore and the boiling surf on the other side, they suddenly came upon a rude hut, built of poles, boards, and palm branches, and anchored firmly to four plantain trees which grew in the shape of a small square.

"Hurrah!" shouted Sam, as soon as his eyes lighted on the hut. "Here's a house!"

"A hut, you mean; for it doesn't seem to amount to a whole lot."

As they drew near the hut they could discover no signs of recent occupation. Clearly it had been abandoned by the person or persons who erected it. There was a peculiar kind of furrow, plainly marked in the sand, that led directly up from the beach to the door of the hut, where it doubled on itself and returned to the shore. It looked as if it had been made by some ponderous marine animal with a flat belly, that had dragged itself up there from the water's edge and then returned by a parallel course. There was no doo to the hut, just a narrow opening, through which the boys peered when they reached it. The interior was pitch dark, and all the boys could make out was that the floor consisted of dried vegetation.

"There's nothing to brag of about this home-made structure," said Dick. "Most anybody could put such a shack together if he had the few materials at hand. It looks inviting enough for us to pass the night in. I move we take possession, for I'm feeling dead tired."

"We can't sleep in our wet clothes, and if we take them off what have we got to cover ourselves with?"

"Well, then, instead of sleeping in the hut, we can dig a trench on the shore and cover ourselves with sand. I bet that'll keep us warm."

Sam agreed that Dick's proposal was worth trying, so they got out of their damp garments, laid them out on the turf to dry, and then, burrowing into the sand, which felt warm and pleasant after having been exposed all day to a tropical sun, fatigue soon closed their eyes in deep slumber. It might have been an hour later that Sam was awakened by a rough blow on the side of the head. Some large, unwieldy object was paddling its way through the sand close beside him. To his startled eyes it looked twice as big as it really was, though in good truth it was big enough. Sam was so frightened by the strange apparition that he let out a yell and scrambled out of his bed of sand with surprising expertness. His cry seemed to alarm the animal, or whatever it was, for it swung around and made off down the beach toward the water with great swiftness, disappearing into the surf with a splash. Dick, aroused by his companion's yell, sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"What's the trouble, Sam?" he inquired, seeing his chum standing up and looking intently at the water.

"Oh, Lord! Don't ask me. Some beast out of the sea was just up here, and I wouldn't be surprised if he was going to make a meal off us."

"What did it look like?" asked Dick.

"Some horrible, ungainly animal; but it must live in the sea, for it went right into it as if it was used to it."

"Some strange sea animal, eh? I guess——"

"There's another one of them!" exclaimed Sam, pointing at something moving along the beach.

Dick looked at it intently.

"Why, that's a turtle!" he said.

"A turtle!" cried Sam. "By ginger! You're right! It was a corking big one that woke me up. I'll admit I was badly scared, for I didn't recognize just what it was. This must be a regular stamping-ground for them, for there are two more yonder. Hadn't we better finish our sleep inside the hut? If one of those amphibious things

crawled over us while we slept it would smother us in a twinkling."

Dick agreed with his chum, and they adjourned to the hut, where they passed the rest of the night.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Stranded Schooner.

The sun was well up when Dick opened his eyes next morning. Sam was still in dreamland, a few feet away. Every square foot of the interior of the rude hut was now discernible. Dick saw that it contained quite an assortment of nautical odds and ends, such as rope, blocks, a kedge-anchor, rope-bound buckets, two or three large, shallow tubs, hardwood poles with blunt-pointed iron heads, and other articles, including a ship's lantern with part of a candle in it. It looked more like a storehouse for marine junk than a habitation. Dick walked outside and found his clothes and Sam's as dry as tinder, so he lost no time dressing himself. The surface of the sea had calmed down to a vast field of rippling waves that reflected the sun's raps with a dazzling glare.

A gentle breeze whispered among the banana trees in the grove behind, and on either side of the hut, and lightly rustled the leaves of the plantains and palms. The vegetation along the centre of the island looked brightly green, while the beach lay hard and smooth and white. Taken all together, it was a pretty picture to the unaccustomed eyes of Dick. As he looked around he spied luscious bunches of bananas ripening in the sun and in the shade of the long, pendent leaves. The sight of them made him feel hungry, and he was soon munching the fruit with great satisfaction. While he was thus engaged Sam came to the door of the hut and looked out. He noticed Dick standing a few yards away working his jaws over something.

"Hello, Dick! What are you eating?"

"Bananas. There are enough around here to feed a small army. Get into your clothes and come over and help yourself."

Sam didn't need a second invitation, for his appetite was on edge, and before five minutes had elapsed he had a fat banana between his teeth.

"Gee! this tastes good, all right!" he said.

"No fear of our starving around here," replied Dick.

"I should say not. If this is an island, it must be a tropical one. I did not think we were so far south."

"I'm pretty well satisfied it's an island. At any rate, we'll soon find out."

"I hope we find somebody living on it. I don't like the idea of being cast ashore on an uninhabited island. Seems as if there'd be less chance of getting off."

They talked about their chances of getting back to the States again until they had satisfied their hunger, then they started to explore the place thoroughly. As soon as they had skirted the banana grove the sight of water on all sides through the trees ahead showed them that they were indeed on an island, and a small one at that. Indeed, it was of so little importance that it was not indicated on many maps by its name, Turtle Key, but was put down as one of a string of dots known by the general title of Kays. Just before

the boys reached the extreme end of the little island in this direction they came to a small grove of plantain trees rising fifteen or twenty feet in the air. Long, narrow leaves drooped from the top of each, and among these nestled the fruit which the natives use as a substitute for bread. The heat of the sun and the exertion of walking had made the boys so thirsty that water seemed absolutely necessary.

"Bananas are all right in their way, but we can't live without drinking," said Sam.

"As this is a tropical island, we may find some cocoanut trees on it," replied Dick, though he wasn't overconfident, for they had covered the island already from end to end and had noticed nothing that looked like a cocoanut tree as they knew it by the pictures they had seen in books.

Still they had traversed a part of the island in the dark, and had not looked at the trees with particular attention. They pushed into the plantain grove to rest under the shade of the leaves, when, to their surprise and delight, they came upon a small natural spring which gushed out of a mass of solid rock.

"Talk about luck! It couldn't be better," said Dick. Now that we have an inexhaustible supply of water, we're all right."

"I'd like to have some other diet than bananas altogether. What kind of fruit is it that we see in these trees?"

"I give it up. The only way to learn is to sample it."

Dick climbed one of the plantains and tossed down some of the fruit. In its raw state the fruit, even when dead ripe, is not very palatable, especially to a person unused to the taste, and consequently Dick and Sam were disappointed when they sampled the specimens they got hold of.

"I guess it ain't ripe yet," said Dick, making a wry face over his first mouthful.

"Ripe! I should say not!" snorted Sam, throwing his away in disgust.

After resting themselves, and taking another drink, they pushed out through the grove and found facing them the continuation of the beach which encircled the island. Here, washed up on the shore, they found the recent wreck of a small vessel, which looked as if it had been schooner rigged, for the stumps of two masts appeared above the level of the deck.

"I guess that storm we were in wrecked that craft," said Dick as the two boys stood looking at the remains of the luckless vessel.

"Let's see what's aboard of her," suggested Sam.

As Dick was as curious as his chum about what might be inside the stranded hull, he led the way on board. They entered the after part through a small sliding doorway. The space was pretty dark, but as soon as their eyes became accustomed to the gloom they saw four open bunks, two on either side, filled with rumpled and not very clean blankets.

"Looks as if the people who were sleeping in them had tumbled out in a hurry," said Sam.

The lockers under the two lower bunks were filled with clothing of light texture, and all sorts of personal belongings. They found other lockers filled with knives, forks, spoons, plates, cups and saucers, charts in Spanish, books in the same language, and a lot of other things too numerous to mention. Forward they discovered a small

space in the bows filled with a cook stove, pots, pans, and various odds and ends connected with the kitchen department. The space between the cabin bulkhead and the galley partition, or main hold, was full of bags of potatoes mostly, with a few casks of molasses. Dick, in rummaging around the ill-smelling cook-room, found a dozen boxes of matches, and put them in his pocket.

"There are a number of articles aboard this wreck that will prove useful to us if we are compelled to remain any length of time on this island," he said to Sam.

"I hope we won't be compelled to stay here long enough to make use of them," answered Sam. "We have seen the whole island now, and if we stayed a year we wouldn't find any more of it to look at."

The boys decided to take up their quarters aboard the wreck, as it rested on an even keel between a bite in the shore. Here they lived and passed a part of their time during the two weeks that followed their advent on the island. Although they tried their best to capture a turtle at night, they failed to do so, the marine specimens being too foxy for them to outwit. Along the beach south of the banana grove they discovered the bleached ribs of some vessel which had gone ashore there years and years before their arrival.

"I'll bet that vessel was wrecked before the flood," remarked Sam, as he and Dick stood looking at the whitened timbers shining above the sand.

"It has undoubtedly been here a long time. You can tell that by the look of the exposed wood," replied Dick.

"Maybe it was wrecked here as much as fifty years ago."

"Or a hundred, perhaps."

"I don't see how any wreck could last a hundred years exposed to the action of the sea."

"There is precious little of this exposed to the sea, or the weather, either, only the ends of a few ribs. Most of the vessel, if it still exists, is protected by the sand, which has buried it practically out of sight."

"Well, never mind this wreck. What I'm interested in now is, when are we going to be taken off this island?" said Sam.

"I wish I could answer your question, but I'm as much in the dark as you are yourself. We've seen many sails in the distance—for instance, there is one yonder that seems to be drawing near us, but not one ever came anywhere near signaling distance."

"There doesn't seem to be any reason why a vessel should put in at this island," said Sam gloomily. "It is merely a long ridge of sand and rock, covered with vegetation and a few trees. The banana grove might furnish a cargo of fruit for some small craft, but probably no one knows anything about it."

The prospect of a speedy rescue seemed very poor to them, and they returned to their quarters on the stranded schooner, feeling that fate was treating them very shabbily.

CHAPTER IX.—The Turtle Catcher.

Dick was generally the first to tumble out of his bunk in the morning. Soon after sunrise on the

morning following the brief conversation which closes the preceding chapter, Dick was up, as usual, ahead of his chum. Leaving Sam snoozing in his berth, Dick started for a stroll in the direction of the hut on the northern edge of the banana grove. He hadn't gone very far before he stopped short with a gasp of surprise. A dirty, weather-beaten schooner was slowly approaching the island under the light breeze that then prevailed. Dick felt like shouting with joy, but restrained himself, and rushed back to the wreck and around his chum.

"What's the matter? Time to get up?" asked Sam sleepily.

"Turn out quick! There's a schooner close in shore! Here is the chance for us to get away from the island!"

Sam was wide awake in a moment. The news of a vessel close in shore by which they could escape from the island made him as active in getting into his garments as a young monkey. As soon as Sam was dressed Dick piloted him to the place whence he could catch a view of the vessel.

"Glory hallelujah!" shouted Sam. "We'll get off at last!"

At that moment a boat was lowered from the schooner's deck, and after several persons had got into her she was rowed to the beach.

"I wonder what they've come after?" asked Dick.

"What do we care what they've come after, so long as they take us off this Lord-forsaken stretch of sand?" said Sam. "Let's go forward and meet them."

Accordingly the boys walked rapidly along the beach toward the spot where they saw the boat would land. Their presence on the island was immediately observed with surprise by those in the boat, especially by a foreign-looking, dark-skinned individual who sat in the stern and steered. When the boat was beached Dick and Sam were close by, ready to enter into negotiations for their rescue.

"By gar!" exclaimed the foreign-looking man, who looked as much like a rascal as any man on two feet ever did, approaching the boys and coming to a stop in front of them, at the same time placing his arms akimbo. "What for you come here to dees key, eh? Dees is my island. You come to steal turtle, eh? Den I feex you pretty quick, mon enfants!"

"What are you talking about?" asked Dick, recovering his nerve. "We've got nothing to do with the turtles that come here. We couldn't steal them if we wanted to."

"Ha! Why, you could not steal them if I no come in my schoonaire?"

"Because we've got no boat."

"You have no boat?" answered the Frenchman incredulously. "No sloop or schoonaire, eh? How you come here, den?"

"We couldn't help coming here. We were cast ashore in the night."

"Aha! You tell me truth, mon enfants?" said the foreigner, his face clearing a bit.

"Yes, that is the truth," replied Dick earnestly.

The Frenchman evidently believed him, for he assumed a more friendly attitude.

"So you got wreck on dees island, eh? How long you been here?"

"A little over two weeks."

"A leetle ovaire two week. How you like ze place?" with a wicked grin.

"We're sick of it."

"You seek of heem, eh?"

"Yes. We want you to take us off."

"I think ze matter ovaire. I come here for turtle. You make yourselves useful, den I agree to take you away, dat es eef you no tell dat dees key ees good turtle ground. Eet ees important dat I keep heem a secret. Comprenez vous?"

The boys understood, and Dick promised him that they wouldn't say a word about the island being a good turtle-catching ground. The Frenchman grinned and held out his hand.

"You sleep in dat hut? Oui? Eet ees my hut. Everyt'ing on dees island ees mine."

"No. We sleep on a wreck at the end of the island, yonder," said Dick, waving his hand in the direction whence he and Sam had come.

The Frenchman pricked up his ears.

"You sleep on a wreck, you say, mon enfant? What ees eet—a sheep?"

"No; a small schooner."

"Ha! Bon! I go see heem. You will come wiz me. I find heem as you say, den we are good friend. Allez!" he said sharply to his four men, who stood listening to the conversation, pointing at the hut. "Now, mon enfants, I go wiz you to ze wreck."

The trio started for the other end of the island, and soon came in sight of the stranded schooner.

"Aha! Dat ees heem, eh? Ze hull look sound. So zaire ees some dozen potato bag on board? In good condition, eh?"

"First class. We've been eating some of them."

"You eet heem? Not mooch, I hope."

"Of course not. How could we eat much of them in two weeks?"

"Ha! Oui! Perhaps you eat one hundred potato, he not count mooch."

When they reached the wreck the Frenchman merely glanced into the gloomy cabin and then made for the open hatchway.

"You mak ze light for me, mon enfant?" he said to Dick.

"Sure! Go light the lantern and bring it here," Dick said to Sam.

His chum brought the lantern in a few minutes. The Frenchman took it and flashed it about in the hold.

"Potato—oui!" he ejaculated with much satisfaction. "And dees barrel—aha! Eet ees molasses. By gar! Dees ees like what you Americaine call heem—peek up ze money. I take dees potato and molasses for ze price of your passage to Nassau, where my schoonaire, ze Jean Barbe, he go wiz ze cargo of turtle. Eet ees a bargain, mon enfants?"

"Well," said Dick, who knew that the Frenchman would make money out of the stuff in the hold of the wreck, "you could throw in the price of our fare to the States, couldn't you?"

"Throw in ze price of—what you mean?"

"We're dead broke, and we want to get back to the United States, so—"

"Ah! Oui. Je comprends. You have nossing in your pocket. You want a leetle money? I tink heem ovaire. Oui, I feex heem all right. Now, mon enfants, you tell me what you call yourself—dat ees, your name."

"My name is Dick Appleton, and this is my friend, Sam Atkins."

"Varee good. I introduce myself, too. Pierre Gerard, of ze schoonaire Jean Barbe. Now we know each ozzaire, you come aboard and take breakfas' wiz me."

"Sure we will!" replied Dick, delighted at the chance to get a square meal of something different to their late stereotyped diet.

They accompanied Pierre Gerard back to where the boat lay. The sailors stood around waiting for him. He held a short conversation with them in French and then ordered them into the boat. As soon as they had taken their places he said:

"Now, mon enfants, in wiz you!"

The boys got into the boat and the captain followed. The sailors shoved off from the beach and headed for the schooner. It took but a few lusty strokes to put them alongside the vessel. Three of the four sailors sprang aboard, and then the captain motioned the boys to follow. They did so. As Dick stepped on deck, closely followed by Sam, they came face to face with—Bill Spurgeon!

CHAPTER X.—Turtle Hunting.

The surprise was mutual. Spurgeon looked at the boys as if he could hardly believe the evidence of his senses, for till that moment he had believed them to be food for the fishes. As for the boys themselves, the last place they expected to meet Bill Spurgeon was on the deck of the turtle catcher's schooner. The rascally sailor found his voice first.

"Well, my hearties, so ye didn't go down with the brig, did ye?"

"No, we didn't," replied Dick sourly, "though you did what you could to make us do so."

"You're dreamin', my laddybuck. We couldn't take ye off in our boat, 'case it was full. I told ye to lower one of the port boats for yerselves."

"That was more than we could do, for there was a hole in the bottom of one, while the tackle of the other was jammed so we couldn't make it work."

The rascal grinned at Dick's explanation.

"Then how did ye manage to get off?"

"We launched the small boat on top of the galley."

"And wind and tide brought ye to this key, I suppose?"

"Key!" ejaculated Dick. "What do you mean by that?"

"This island, then, ye ignoramus! It's called Turtle Key."

"How came you to be aboard this schooner?"

"That's my business, my hearty. I'm chief mate here, so ye'd better mind your p's and q's, or overboard ye'll go to the sharks!"

"We've got nothing to do with you. We're here on Captain Gerard's invitation."

"Dat ees right. I have invite them to breakfas' wiz me," chipped in the skipper, who had been listening to the conversation between Bill Spurgeon and the boys. "I see dat you know dem, Mistaire Spurgeon. So much ze bettaire. Ve vill all get along verree nicelee togezzer. Now, mon enfants, you vill follow me to ze cabin."

Dick and Sam, glad to part company with Bill Spurgeon, whose statement that he was mate of the schooner was not pleasing news to them since it was settled they were to go to the town of Nas-

sau, on the island of New Providence, in her, hastened after the French skipper, followed by a baleful glance from Spurgeon's eyes. Breakfast was placed on the cabin table almost immediately by the cook, a dark-skinned creole from the island of Martinique. It was nothing to brag about as a meal, but in spite of its drawbacks the two boys enjoyed it, because it was really the best they had tasted since the treacherous supper they had partaken of at the roadhouse the night they had been shanghaied aboard the brig.

After they had finished they returned on deck and walked up and down, talking together. Captain Gerard remained in the cabin, and when Bill Spurgeon went down to eat his breakfast the two rascals had a talk together about the boys. The result of the powwow seemed quite satisfactory to Spurgeon, who regarded Dick and Sam with a kind of malicious satisfaction when he next came on deck. When Captain Gerard made his appearance he ordered the anchor to be raised and sail set on the schooner. This order was received by the crew with surprise. Nevertheless, they got busy, under Spurgeon's directions, and the vessel was sailed around to the eastern point of the island, where she was anchored as close in shore, opposite the wreck, as the captain dared take her. Two boats were lowered, into one of which was put tackle for breaking out the cargo of the stranded wreck. The captain went ashore in one, Bill Spurgeon being in charge of the other. Dick and Sam were left behind on the schooner. A three-legged derrick was improvised and placed above the hatchway of the wreck. The barrels of molasses were got out first. One of these was lowered into each boat in turn and carried over to the schooner, where Spurgeon superintended their transfer to the hold of the Jean Barbe. By mid-day everything the hold contained had been transferred to the schooner. The sailors had also ransacked the cabin, carrying away with them whatever their fancy suggested. The galley was not meddled with, though the boys had placed a bag of potatoes in it to be handy for them to cook. Captain Gerard invited Dick and Sam to eat dinner in the cabin, and they were not slow in accepting his invitation.

"Well, mon enfants, dees mornin' you do nossing; dees afternoon you make yourself busy. You help catch turtle."

"All right," replied Dick cheerfully. "Tell us what to do, and we'll do it."

"You vill help row one of ze boat. See dat you do as you told. Turtle scare easilee. You vill go wiz Mistaire Spurgeon. He ees ze mate of dees schoonaire."

Dick and Sam did not like the idea of being under that rascal's thumb, but there was no help for it. As soon as Bill Spurgeon had finished his dinner two boats were cleared for action, the Frenchman taking charge of one and Spurgeon the other. The rascally mate ordered the boys into his boat, and then gave them instructions as to how they should row as soon as a turtle was sighted.

"Mind ye don't scare the animal, or it'll be worse for ye!" he said, with a threatening shake of his head.

The necessary implements being put in the boats, all was ready for business. Suddenly Spurgeon made a slight motion with his hand, and the four rowers behind them altered their

course a little, working their oars so slowly and gently as scarcely to cause a ripple. Notwithstanding their cautious approach, the turtle they were hunting caught sight of the boat and sank like a shot. Spurgeon made a quick motion with his hand, and his boat's crew began to row with the utmost rapidity, striking their blades deep into the water. The turtle gave the boat a long and exciting chase. Finally, after half an hour of dodging about, the boat was stopped with a jerk. Down darted Spurgeon's harpoon straight at its mark. The turtle was speared, and the float attached to the harpoon came to the surface. Spurgeon recovered the line and held on to it. After a few struggles and spasmodic attempts to get away, its spirit was broken, and the tired turtle tamely allowed itself to be dragged ashore. Bill Spurgeon put off in the boat again, without any unnecessary delay, and secured several more turtles before it became necessary to quit for the day.

CHAPTER XI.—A Treacherous Act.

For three days, weather conditions being perfect, the hunt for turtles continued, at the end of which time the skipper had obtained all the turtles he could take into his hold. After dinner, on the fourth day, preparations were made by the crew to get under way for Nassau. Dick and Sam, who, as usual, had dinner with the Frenchman in the cabin, were in a state of jubilation. The hour of their departure from the measly island, as they called it, had at last arrived. They stood well forward, watching the small crew get up the anchor, and casting what they supposed to be their final glances at the island. Neither observed the approach of Captain Gerard and Bill Spurgeon until the skipper spoke.

"By gar! You are two lazee boy. What you t'ink, Mistaire Spurgeon, we do not want them aboard wiz us—non?"

"No, they're only in the way," replied Spurgeon, with a vindictive grin, as the surprised boys turned about. "Throw 'em overboard, and let 'em find their way to the key as best they can."

"Ovaire wiz you both!" cried Pierre Gerard, giving Dick and Sam a shove into the sea. "Now, then, swim to ze island, mon enfants. By gar! You vill be luckee if ze shark do not make a meal of you!"

The boys struck the water with a double splash and went under. In a moment or two they came to the surface, blowing water out of their mouths like a couple of grampuses. Followed by the Frenchman's jeering laugh, the boys struck out for the shore. The only real peril they faced was from a shark, if one happened to be in that vicinity just then. Fortunately, they escaped that danger, and finally touched bottom and walked ashore. By that time the Jean Barbe was under full sail. She made little progress, however, as the wind was very light. The boys watched the Jean Barbe until they grew tired, then they stripped and laid their clothes on the sand to dry. The schooner was perhaps three miles off the island when Dick called Sam's attention to what appeared to be a dark, low-lying cloud on the distant horizon.

"I saw several flashes of light there," he said. "I'll bet there's a storm coming up."

"Let it come," growled Sam. "I don't care what comes up, unless it's a vessel."

"I'd sooner be on this key, as it's called, than on the Jean Barbe, if she should be caught like the Malta was."

"It isn't every craft that's knocked out by a gale," answered Sam. "If most vessels didn't escape storms there'd be mighty few of them sailing the sea."

"That's true enough, but the Frenchman's schooner doesn't look like a vessel that is any too stanch."

"I've got money to bet that she'll reach Nassau all right."

"Probably she will, if luck runs with her."

While the boys were speaking the cloud on the northeast horizon grew bigger and bigger. It looked black and threatening. Red flashes of light shot athwart it in an angry way, showing that a heavy gale was brewing in that quarter. The storm was too far off yet for the sound of thunder to reach the ears of the boys.

"It will be down on this island in the course of an hour or two," said Dick, "and is likely to tear things up generally."

"We'll have to take refuge in the cabin of the wreck," replied Sam.

"Not much," returned Dick. "That hulk wouldn't last half an hour in a good blow. The wind has a clean sweep across the end of the island. It will be more than likely to lift the wreck bodily and carry it off to sea."

"There is only the hut then for us to take shelter in. It doesn't look any too strong to my eye."

"I'll warrant it's twice as safe as the wreck in a gale. Come! Let us examine it."

They looked the hut over, and saw that it was well braced among the four plantain trees, besides having a good background in the banana grove. It was exposed in front, however, to the coming storm.

"The rain will come through that just like a sieve," said Sam. "We'll be like a couple of drowned rats in there."

"I saw quite a piece of sailcloth stowed against the cabin bulkhead of the wreck," said Dick. "We'll get that and spread it on top and in front of the hut. It will make a fine protection."

Sam agreed that would be just the thing to do. Finding that their clothes were dry by this time, they routed out the sailcloth and carried it to the hut, together with a coil of thin line. After half an hour's labor they had the hut in shape to resist any kind of a downpour.

"The storm is coming on fast," said Sam, pointing at the northeastern heavens, now covered half way to the zenith with a dense black pall, riven constantly by streaks of electricity. The Jean Barbe was still in sight to the northwest, and there was little doubt but the tempest would catch her good and hard.

"I think we'd better try and save a few things from the derelict," suggested Dick. "I don't believe there'll be much left of her a few hours hence."

The boys got a hustle on, and by the time the distant thunder began to grow distinct they had secured not only the stove and stovepipe, but everything else of any possible value that had not been looted by the schooner's crew. That included the bag of potatoes, a revolver that Dick found

hanging in a corner of the cabin, and a case of American canned meat, which they had previously overlooked. In fact, there was nothing movable that they didn't bring away, so that they finally left the derelict completely denuded. As they could not tell how long the storm might last, they laid in a store of bananas, together with a big supply of shellfish. Dick even caught a mess of fish for supper, while Sam put the stovepipe in place and secured a quantity of wood to feed the fire with. The air had grown quite still, and a dead calm prevailed all around Turtle Key. This stagnant condition of things, in the face of that awful black pall advancing upon them made the two boys feel very uneasy.

CHAPTER XII.—The Wreck and the Girl.

The sky grew darker and darker, and yet everything was still around the key. The lightning blazed fiercer and fiercer, and the thunder waxed louder as the moments passed. The aspect of nature was terrifying to the two boys. If the wind and waves had risen gradually they would not have been so impressed. That would have seemed natural to them; but this mysterious calm in the face of that fierce commotion miles away gave them the creeps.

"What's that?" asked Sam suddenly.

A low moaning sound came to their ears out of the blackness ahead. This was accompanied by light puffs of wind that died away and then came stronger.

"Look yonder!" cried Dick. "It's coming!"

A long line of white foam was advancing with great swiftness upon Turtle Key. It was the storm line.

"We'll be swamped!" gasped Sam, turning pale.

Dick made no reply. Two minutes later the tempest struck the island and swept past it with a roar that tried the nerves of the two boys. The sea rushed clear up to the hut and swept across the island, flooding the little dwelling with an inch of water, which, however, soaked into the earth at once. The force of the wind was fearful, and the hut shook and staggered under it, but held firm to its supports. Outside was one opaque mass, except where the white foam of the waters gleamed through the darkness between the frequent flashes of lightning. The boys had witnessed many a heavy thunder storm in the States, but nothing that compared with this. It quite overtopped the gale that had wrecked the Malta, and that was no light one.

For a long time the boys crouched in the one place, never uttering a word. They were cowed by this fearful demonstration on nature's part. The rain poured down in bucketfuls, but not a drop penetrated the canvas-covered roof. At last they grew accustomed to the uproar of the elements. The fact that nearly an hour had elapsed since the storm burst upon them, and they were still in the land of the living, and seemingly safe in the hut, brought their courage back.

"How would you like to be on the Jean Barbe now?" asked Dick at length.

"Not me," replied Sam. "I'm satisfied to be where I am."

"You'll agree, then, that there are worse places than this island?"

"Bet your life there are—in a gale like this."

"Captain Gerard and Bill Spurgeon are having the time of their lives now, or I'm no prophet. If they and the crew escape they will have reason to be thankful."

"That's right," nodded Sam.

If the boys had been able to look upon a storm-tossed section of the ocean, fifteen miles away to the westward, at that moment, they would have seen the last of the Jean Barbe, as, after an ineffectual fight, she was engulfed by the angry billows and sent to the bottom with all hands. Thus, unknown to the boys, perished the rascally turtle catcher and his scoundrelly mate, Bill Spurgeon, with all their sins upon their guilty souls. Dick and Sam made no attempt to get supper that evening, nor did they sleep, beyond a doze now and then, all the night through. The storm raged until dawn, and then lulled almost as quickly as it had come up, leaving the ocean around about a seething caldron of foam and spray.

With the rising of the sun, nature resumed a smiling mood, though the wind blew strong and the surf rolled heavily along the beach. The appetites of the boys beginning to reassert themselves, Dick lighted a fire in the stove and started to get breakfast under way. This consisted of fried fish and bananas, with a few mussels thrown in for the sake of variety. The boy then ventured forth to see what havoc the gale had done on the island. Apparently the little key was none the worse for the buffeting it had received. Dick led the way to the eastern end, curious to learn whether the derelict yet remained on the shore. They found that every plank of her had disappeared, and not a sign remained on the beach to tell that the hulk had ever rested her keel there.

"Suppose we had trusted ourselves aboard of her, as you suggested, where would we be now?" asked Dick.

"Don't mention it. The ocean would be singing a requiem above us," replied Sam.

"It's a good thing we took the stuff out of her. We may have to stay here many moons, in which case we'll find use for everything."

The boys returned to the hut, and then continued their walk in the opposite direction.

"Hello!" ejaculated Sam suddenly. "Look yonder! There's some kind of vessel ashore on the reef, off the western end of the island."

Dick followed the direction of his chum's finger, and sure enough, wedged in between two black rocks, and surrounded by a cloud of foam and spray, was a small sloop yacht, about thirty-five feet long. Her mast had gone by the board, and lay beating about in the yeasty sea, held by its tracery of rope. The boom, with its closely reefed canvas, hugged the top of the trunk cabin, and projected across the cockpit. As far as the boys could make out, when they had approached the wreck as closely as the limits of the surf-swept beach permitted them to do, the hull seemed to have received no great injury. Unless the waves soon subsided, it was not in the nature of things for the little boat to long survive their buffeting.

"It's a sort of pleasure craft," remarked Dick, as he noticed the flashing of the sunlight on the brasswork here and there.

The steering-wheel was brass-bound, and in front of it stood the brass hood of a small bin-

nacle. There was not a sign of life aboard of her, and the boy did not expect to see any. The wonder was that after such a storm, to which she had undoubtedly been exposed, a single plank of her remained to tell of her fate. While the boys stood looking at her, speculating as to whom she had belonged to, and whence she had come, an apparition in white slowly arose in the cockpit at a point about where the cabin door was, but which, from the boat's position, they could not see.

"Great Scott! What's that?" cried Dick.

"Why, it looks like a girl!" gurgled the astonished Sam.

"A girl!" ejaculated Dick. "So it is!"

The apparition turned her eyes slowly shoreward and saw the two boys.

"Help! help!" she screamed, holding out her arms in supplication.

The cry was borne to their ears by the wind with startling distinctness, and the piteous appeal galvanized Dick into action.

"We must save her, Sam!" he cried excitedly.

"How can we?" replied Sam. "We can't go off there in this sea!"

"One of us must take the chance," insisted Dick.

"It would be nothing short of suicide. You couldn't swim out and back, to save your life."

"Run to the hut, unship that line with which we tied the canvas to the roof, and fetch it back here," said Dick.

"What do you mean to do?"

"Do as I say, and you will see. Hurry now, for every moment is precious."

Sam, seeing that his companion had some purpose in his mind, hurried away on the run, while Dick began making encouraging signals to the girl on the wreck.

She seemed to understand that an attempt was to be made to save her, and she made no further outcry or demonstration.

Sam was back inside of ten minutes with the long line.

"I'm going to try and swim out and bring her ashore," said Dick, taking one end of the line and tying it around his waist. "The hardest job will be to get out to the wreck. If I succeed, then I will depend on you, Sam, to help us reach the beach by hauling in on the line and preventing the undertow from getting the better of us."

Sam understood, and said he'd do his part.

Before his chum's arrival Dick had divested himself of all his clothing but his trousers, and was ready to make the venture.

As a big wave receded he followed it to the edge of the water line, took a header through the surf, and began swimming out.

He took care to keep as near as possible in line with the reef on which the wreck was perched, so as to avoid the incoming waves, the force of which the reef broke and scattered.

Being an expert and strong swimmer, he gradually drew nearer and nearer the stranded sloop yacht.

At last he was close enough to seize a rope that hung from her bows.

With the help of this he scrambled on board.

The girl gave a cry of joy as she saw him come over the side.

Taking care that the line by which he was connected with the shore did not get entangled

with the wreckage alongside, Dick walked aft and jumped down into the cockpit.

CHAPTER XIII.—A Treasure Trove

"You have come to save me?" said the girl, looking anxiously into Dick's face.

"I have, miss," he replied. "Anybody else on the boat besides yourself?"

"No. I was the only one aboard when the yacht slipped her anchor and drifted out of Clifton harbor, Watling Island, night before last."

"You were the only one aboard!" ejaculated Dick in surprise.

She nodded.

"Have you been at sea alone since the night before last?"

"Yes."

"I don't see how you kept afloat last night in that storm."

"This boat couldn't sink even if she capsized."

"Why not?"

"Because she is fitted with four airtight tanks under the cabin."

"You must have been terribly frightened by the storm."

"I was—dreadfully."

"About what time did the boat go on this reef?"

"Just before daylight."

"It seems a miracle to me that she didn't go to pieces at once. She must have slid on to her perch here in an odd way. She seems to have glided into a kind of rocky cradle that holds her on an almost even keel. I don't think another vessel would strike the same spot in the random way she must have done once in a thousand years. It was blind luck, and that what saved your life," said Dick, who by this time had noticed that the girl was quite pretty, though she looked all broke up over the strenuous experience of the last thirty-six hours. What is your name, miss?"

"Florence Strong."

"And mine is Dick Appleton. Now, if you will trust yourself to me, I will carry you ashore."

She was willing to do anything he said, so he helped her on top of the trunk cabin, bound the end of the rope around them both, for greater security, and then led her to a point near the bow.

After signaling to Sam he lowered himself into the water, holding the girl closely with one arm, and with the other struck out for the beach, Sam drawing in closely on the line, and thus preventing the undertow from sweeping them away. In a few minutes they landed safely on the shore, and then Dick introduced the dripping lady to his friend.

"Come! We will hurry to our hut, which is close by. There you can remove your wet clothes and roll yourself in a blanket until your garments have dried in the sun. They won't take more than half an hour, if you wring the water out well, and my chum and I will put in the time on the opposite side of the island," said Dick.

During the short walk the girl told her rescuer and his friend that her father was the owner of the sloop yacht, the name of which was the Niobe. They hailed from Philadelphia, and had been cruising in the West Indies for six weeks, during

which time they had visited the chief towns in Cuba, Hayti, Porto Rico, and other islands.

They had put in at Clifton harbor, Watling Island, for supplies, on their way home, and it was while her father and the small crew of two young men were ashore in the small boat that the yacht had in some unexplainable way slipped her moorings and drifted out to sea, carrying the girl away with her. The boys left Miss Strong in full possession of the hut, after showing her where she could hang up her clothing to the best advantage in the sun, and walked around the banana grove to the beach on the south side of the island.

"She's a pretty girl, all right, in spite of her wilted look," remarked Sam as he and Dick strolled down to the spot where the bleached ribs of the old wreck stuck out of the sandy beach.

"Yes, and a very interesting one, too," replied Dick.

"I guess you have made yourself solid with her by saving her from a watery grave."

"Oh, you did your share toward saving her from her precarious position."

"I didn't begin to do as much as you, though. Say! Her father is bound to go on a hunt for the yacht, and in that case may look in at this key; then we'll all be taken off."

"There is no doubt but he will search for the boat, though last night's storm will make him feel that the quest is next to hopeless. Whether in searching these seas he will touch at this island is likely to be a matter of luck. At any rate, it will be fortunate for us if he does."

As Dick spoke his eye was caught by the glitter of a small, bright object shining in the sun. It lay in a deep trench furrowed out by the storm of the night before in the midst of the bleached ribs of the ancient wreck. He jumped down into the long excavation, and picked up the shiny object, which proved to be an old Spanish gold coin.

"See what I found here!" he said, holding the coin up before Sam's eyes.

"What is it? A piece of money?" asked Sam.

"That's what it is," replied Dick, tossing it to him.

"You found it on the sand?" said Sam.

"Right here," replied Dick, giving the sand a kick with the toe of his shoe.

To his amazement, three other gold pieces turned up. He pounced upon them, and found that they were similar in all respects to the one Sam held in hand.

"Gee whiz! Here is more money running around loose!" he exclaimed.

The moment Sam spied the three additional pieces he sprang down into the trench and began pawing the sand. He turned up six gold coins almost in as many seconds.

"The sand is full of money!" he cried excitedly.

Dick, just as excited as his chum, got busy, too, and almost every handful of sand they tossed up contained one or two gold pieces.

"Say! if this doesn't beat the deck!" gurgled Sam. "Where do you suppose all this money came from?"

"I couldn't tell you where it came from," replied Dick; "how could I? One thing, however, seems clear to me. It must have been aboard this old vessel when she went ashore years ago."

"Maybe she was some pirate craft of the early part of the century that was lost on this island

in a storm. You know that pirates flourished in the Carribbean Sea seventy-five and a hundred years ago."

"I wouldn't be surprised if she was such a craft," admitted Dick.

"This is slow work," said Sam, after they had accumulated a pile of fifty or more gold pieces. "There must be a lot of money around this spot. What we need badly is a shovel to throw the sand out of the trench. It falls back into the hole we are making as fast as we throw it out."

"As we haven't a shovel on the island, a piece of board will have to answer. We will get a couple of light boards when we return to the hut."

"Let's go and get them now," said Sam eagerly.

"No. We must give Miss Strong time enough for her clothes to dry and to dress herself," said Dick, taking off his jacket and throwing the gold pieces into it.

"How much time will she need?"

"An hour, at any rate."

"We've been away from the hut nearly that now," replied Sam, who was anxious to secure a board so that he could turn up the sand more expeditiously.

Owing to the fact that the sand fell back as fast as they turned it up, the gold pieces came much slower to the surface than at first, and finally only appeared at uncertain intervals.

"We might as well quit until we get the boards," said Sam, wiping the perspiration from his face.

Dick agreed with him, so they stopped to rest and to handle and examine the eighty-odd coins they had so far secured.

"These must be worth \$10 each," said Sam. "They are about the size of one of our own eagles."

"They are old coins, all right, though in good condition because they've been out of circulation a great many years. If they're worth \$10 each, then this batch foots up about \$800."

I wouldn't be surprised if there are thousands of dollars' worth of them still in the sand here," said Sam.

"We'll make it our business to dig the spot over until they cease to come to light. It might be our luck to have lighted on a real pirate's treasure."

"In that case we're sure to become wealthy."

"I guess we can stand a little prosperity after the knocking about we've lately been up against."

"Bet your life we can. I wouldn't object to finding a million in money."

"We won't need a million, or a quarter of that. Don't you worry."

"I'd be satisfied if my share amounted to \$100,000," grinned Sam.

"You don't want much! Wouldn't a couple of thousand make you feel rich?"

"Ho! What's a couple of thousand?" sniffed Sam. "You never heard of a pirate's treasure amounting to so little."

"Don't run away with the notion that we've hit upon a pirate's treasure, just because this island is somewhere in the neighborhood of the Carribbean Sea. We may not find much over \$1,000 altogether."

"Why not?" Haven't we got \$800 already, and we've only been digging with our fingers? If we had a good shovel I'll bet we'd soon discover the crumbling remains of an old treasure chest—may-

be two chests," said Sam, nodding his head confidently.

"Well, there is no use arguing the matter. I guess we've spent an hour now, so we may venture to return to the hut and get the boards to continue our search with."

That suited the impatient Sam, who was on his feet in a jiffy, and back the boys went to the hut, where they left the rescued girl.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Treasure of Turtle Key

They found Florence Strong seated in front of the hut, trying to untangle the tresses of her long golden hair with her fingers. Her clothes had dried, and she had put them on again.

"Well, how do you feel, Miss Strong?" asked Dick with a smile.

"Pretty good, considering the experience I went through," she answered with an arch look. "You must think me an awful ungrateful girl, for I haven't thanked you for saving my life."

"Don't worry about that. Sam and I are glad to have rendered you a service."

"But you risked your life swimming out to the wreck of the yacht. I can never thank you enough for that. I hope you will understand that I am very grateful to you, Mr. Appleton."

"All right. I believe you. I suppose your father will get another vessel and go hunting around among these islands after the Niobe, in expectation of finding her ashore somewhere?" said Dick.

"My father will not leave these waters till he finds some trace of me," she answered.

"How far do you suppose Watling Island is from here?"

"I haven't the least idea," she replied; "but I suppose it cannot be a great way, as the yacht merely floated aimlessly about from the time she broke loose until the gale caught her. Then she went like a bird before it; though there wasn't a bit of sail up."

"Had there been any sail up she would have capsized," said Dick.

While Dick was talking to the girl Sam was hunting around for a couple of suitable boards to use in digging after more money. Finally he found about what he thought would answer their purpose, and brought them forward.

"Want to go treasure hunting with us, Miss Strong?" asked Dick.

"Treasure hunting!" Florence exclaimed, opening her pretty eyes in surprise.

"Yes. See the money we've found already." And he showed the bunch of coins in his jacket.

"Gracious!" she cried. "Where did you find all that money?"

"On the south shore of the island, back of this hut. Fetch one of those empty pots, Sam, so I can put these coins in it."

Sam got a pot in a minute, and Dick dumped the money into it.

"Come along," he said. "You can lend a hand, Miss Strong."

"What can I do?"

"Pick up the money as we turn it up out of the sand. Fetch another pot with you, Sam. It will be handier than my coat to put the money in."

"How did the money come to be on the shore?" Florence asked, clearly astonished at such a circumstance.

"We found it in the midst of the wreck of an old vessel which must have come ashore on the island sixty or more years ago," replied Dick.

"Dear me! How funny!" she said. "Are those bananas?" she asked suddenly, pointing toward the grove.

"That's what they are. That reminds me that Sam and I haven't had our breakfast yet, and I suppose you're half starved, too?"

"Yes, I am quite hungry, though I had plenty to eat aboard the yacht."

"You wouldn't mind eating something, would you, Sam?" asked Dick.

"That money knocked all thoughts of breakfast out of my head. I guess we'd better eat before resuming work."

"I think so, too. Start a fire in the stove. There are fish and mussels enough left to make a meal for all of us."

Sam built a fire and Dick acted as chief cook. In half an hour they sat down on the sand to their rude meal, and Florence declared that the fish tasted fine, all things considered. They topped their repast off with bananas, and after washing the pans and dishes the trio started for the old wreck. Although one good shovel would have done the business better than half a dozen boards, still the boys found their rude implements a great improvement over their hands, and they were soon making the loose sand fly. At first, no golden pieces appeared to gladden the hearts of the boys. They had to get rid of the sand they had already sifted of its precious freight.

The first piece of money appeared flying through the air as Dick tossed a boardful of sand a yard or two away. Florence saw it shining in the sunlight and ran after it. After that the boy diggers grew more careful, and soon the coins began to jingle in the pot that had been provided for their reception. Perhaps fifty pieces had been turned into the pot when Dick's board struck an obstruction. Getting down on his knees, and pulling the sand carefully away, the broken remains of a stout box were revealed. Further investigation disclosed the fact that it was full of golden coin, plentifully mixed with sand.

"Hurrah!" shouted Sam. "Here's the treasure chest at last."

There seemed to be no doubt about that, and the boys had the pot filled to the brim with money in a twinkling.

"Carry it around to the hut, Sam, and dump it on the floor, if you can't find a better place for it," said Dick, wiping his face with his shirt sleeve.

Sam hastened away, and while he was gone Dick told the girl about the adventures he and his chum had had since they ran away from Oriole Academy. He was about half through his narrative when Sam returned with the empty pot, and he paused long enough to refill the culinary article and despatch his friend with it back to the hut. By the time Sam got back again Dick was telling Florence how they had been cast ashore on Turtle Key.

"You can continue the story, Sam, while I act as packhorse," said Dick.

The pot was filled with coin, and Dick bore it to the hut in a leisurely way, for he believed they

had time enough and to spare to transport several chests of gold, were they so fortunate as to find them.

While he was absent Sam described the arrival of the turtle catcher and his schooner, the *Jean Barbe*, at the key, and their exciting experience at hunting turtles along the north shore of the island. It took an hour to carry the last of the contents of the chest to the hut, and then the boys began digging for more chests. It was warm work, and they had to stop frequently to rest and seek the shelter of the banana grove. By the time the sun was directly overhead they had found perhaps thirty more scattered coins, but had found no more chests.

"I'm about played out," said Dick. "If it's all the same to you, Sam, I move that we knock off for dinner and a good long rest. We've done pretty well so far."

There was quite a pyramid of gold coins in the hut to gladden their eyes. Dick estimated that if the coins were worth \$10 each there must be all of \$100.00 in the pile.

"That represents a snug little fortune for each of us, with something to spare for Miss Strong, who ought to be remembered in consideration of her presence, and as a recompense for picking up a small part of the money before we struck the chest itself," said Dick.

"Oh, I don't want any of it," she said. "My father is well off, and I've always had everything I could wish for since I can remember."

"You're fortunate. However, a little present from us won't come amiss, and we'd like you to take something away with you, when we are rescued from this island, to remember us by."

"I don't need anything to remember you, Mr. Appleton," she replied. "You saved my life, and that fact will never fade from my mind."

After dinner, which consisted of canned meat and bananas, they rested in the shade of the grove, and talked, until, between heat and the loss of rest the night before, the three fell into a sound sleep. It was close on to sundown when they awoke. The sea had gone down so much that there was scarcely any surf along the north shore. Dick proposed that they should go to the western end of the island and see how the stranded *Niobe* fared. They soon came in sight of the yacht, and found her now high, and almost dry, on the top of the reef. Having learned from Florence that there were many things, including a small supply of provisions, on the *Niobe* that were bound to prove useful to them on the island, Dick began to figure on visiting the wreck and bringing some of the articles ashore.

The water being comparatively smooth now between the reef and the shore, Dick saw that it would be an easy matter to swim out to the yacht.

"Sam, take Miss Strong to the hut and bring the long line back with you," he said.

In fifteen minutes Sam returned with the line which had figured to such good purpose in the rescue of the girl. Dick got out of all his clothes, tied the line about his middle, and swam out to the reef. Securing the end of the rope to the short bowsprit of the yacht, he ran aft and entered the cabin. He found it quite roomy, and handsomely fitted up for the comfort of Mr. Strong and his daughter. Subsequently Dick looked into

the small fore-castle in the bow, and found it fitted with two bunks for the hands, a cookstove, and all the necessary culinary articles for preparing a good meal.

After a thorough investigation of the cabin, Dick took a square of oilskin and wrapped up a canister of coffee, another of tea, some sugar, half a dozen cans of condensed milk, several packages of crackers, some potted tongue, and sundry other articles. Tying the neck of the bundle tightly, as one would a pudding about to be put into a pot for boiling, Dick refastened the long line around his waist and started back for the shore. The trip was easy, even with the big bundle to manage, as Sam helped him by pulling in on the rope.

"That will do for this time, for it will soon be dark," said Dick, dropping his burden and resuming his clothes.

"What did you bring off?" asked Sam curiously.

"You'll see when we get back to the hut, was the reply.

That evening, as darkness fell quickly over the island and the seascape, the rich aroma of good coffee permeated the atmosphere of the hut probably for the first time in its existence, and the three young people partook of a tolerably decent meal, which included a mess of fresh fish caught by Sam.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion

After supper the young people sat in front of the hut and talked.

"Although Sam and I have never felt exactly lonesome, still your coming, Miss Florence, seems to have made a whole lot of difference. You have increased the population by one-half as much again, and that fact makes the island more cheerful."

"I'm glad to find myself of some use at last," laughed Florence. "Oh!" she cried suddenly. "Isn't that lovely?"

She pointed across the undulating surface of the ocean to the spot where the moon was just peeping above the distant watery horizon, casting a silvery pathway across the mighty deep. The boys admitted that it was a splendid sight.

"If you want to see a moonrise, or a sunrise, in all its perfection, you have got to go to sea. Viewing it from this island is just about the same as seeing it from the deck of a ship. There is nothing to obstruct the vision," said Dick.

They watched the moon as it soared above the water line and hung suspended in the deep azure like a glistening ball of silver. Whether the moon had a somnolent effect on them or not, certain it is they began to feel sleepy soon after it arose. The boys turned the hut over to the girl for her to sleep in, while they took up their quarters in the shadow of the banana grove. Next morning, soon after sunrise, Dick and Sam were on the western shore, looking off toward the wreck.

"I want to go aboard of her this time," said Sam.

"All right," replied Dick. "Nobody is going to stop you."

So Sam stripped, put the line about his waist, and plunged into the sea. After looking the yacht all over he returned with a small bundle of canned

meat. Then Dick took his turn and brought off a number of things. The boys made two trips each, and then returned to the hut with the results of their early morning exercise, to find Florence already up and a pot of coffee made. They had fried potatoes and potted tongue for breakfast, with the inevitable banana as a wind up to the repast. Then all three visited the ancient wreck and continued their search for another money chest, but without result.

"I guess we've secured whatever treasure there was aboard this craft," said Dick.

"If we have, then she wasn't a pirate ship," said Sam.

"Why not?"

"Because if she were a pirate, we ought to find a chest full of costly pieces of jewelry, such as rings, watches, etc."

"This might have been a Spanish government ship, carrying the pay to the army in Cuba," said Dick. "That would account for the presence of a chest of gold aboard of her."

"That's so," nodded Sam. "If we had a couple of shovels we would search the wreck much better. We can't do anything more with these barrels."

"I'm satisfied with what we have done. What we want to do now is to pack that coin up for shipment so that we can take it with us when the time comes for us to leave the island," said Dick.

"Correct," replied Sam. "How will we do it. Anybody would be able to tell that we had a lot of money in our possession, and would expect us to divide up, or even take it away by force. It would be a great temptation for some of these West Indians to do us up for the money."

"Then how are we to manage about it?" asked Sam a bit anxiously.

"I noticed a small tool-chest aboard the yacht. We must get it ashore, or at least a hammer, saw and nails. Then we'll be able to make a half dozen small boxes out of the superfluous wood we have around. After nailing the coin up in them, I'll defy anybody to say what is inside of them."

Dick's suggestion was carried out, and within forty-eight hours the Spanish gold coin was all securely boxed, ready for shipment. The treasure being now satisfactorily disposed of for the present, all the party had to do was to eat, sleep, and watch hopefully for an early rescue. One thing that caused the boys a good deal of uneasiness was the fear that the turtle catcher would shortly return for another load of the marine animals. This fear was groundless, for the Jean Barbe, and all on board, lay at the bottom of the ocean; but the boys could not be expected to know that.

A week went by, and they looked every day to see Florence's father appear on the lookout after the Niobe and his only daughter. They saw many sails in the distance, but none came within a league or more of Turtle Key. During this time Dick and the girl became especially friendly. Sam observed their growing liking for each other without making any remark on the subject to his chum. He got into the habit of going off fishing alone and leaving them together. The weather held uncommonly fine since the last storm, the surface of the ocean often lying as calm as a millpond.

The Niobe remained perched on the rocks in the

same position in which she had come ashore. By degrees the boys removed about everything of value from her. All the marine junk which had originally filled a large part of the hut now lay outside, for the boys had no use for it, and it was only in the way. A second and a third week had passed away since Miss Strong had been added to the population of Turtle Key, and still there was no sign of a vessel of any kind making for the island.

"Poor papa!" said the girl tearfully. "If he only knew where to look for me he would soon be happy."

"There are so many of these small keys, I've heard, that it is like hunting for a needle in the haystack to look them over," replied Dick. "However, we're bound to get taken off some time, so cheer up, Florence."

He put his arm around her waist, and she did not resist the familiarity.

"Do you feel sure that no matter what happens Sam and I will stand by you, and see that you get back to your father as soon as possible?"

"Yes," she said.

"Do you like me, Florence?" he said, drawing her closer to him.

"Yes," she answered.

"How much?"

"Very much."

"Will you always like me very much, even after we leave here?"

"Yes."

He raised her head, and their eyes met. The temptation was too much for Dick to see a pair of red lips so close to his own, so he bent down and kissed her. She hid her face on his shoulder, and after that they were very happy together.

Three days more elapsed, and then a sail appeared on the eastern horizon. Dick, Sam and Florence were eating their dinner at the time and did not see it, for it was approaching the south side of the key. The dishes were washed, and they were sitting in the shade of the banana grove when the sail, now plainly a good-sized schooner, came coasting in within a half mile of the shore behind. Those on board were sweeping the island with their glasses, and presently they made out the wreck of the Niobe on the reef. The vessel was headed right in at once toward the reef.

A fine-looking, gray-haired gentleman, standing well forward, with a telescope in his hands, gave a cry of despair, for he had recognized his lost yacht. A boat was lowered, and put off with the gentleman in it. He boarded the yacht and looked inside the cabin for Florence. His daughter was not there. A singular circumstance struck him at once—the fact that everything movable on the vessel, even to the compass in the binnacle, had been removed from it. What did this mean? That the wreck had been plundered by somebody, and his child's corpse probably cast into the sea. The island showed no traces of being inhabited, but nevertheless he decided to land and go over it, as a last forlorn hope.

The boat was beached, and Mr. Strong, accompanied by the captain of the schooner, landed and started around by the north shore. They had advanced but a short distance before Dick, happening to cast his eyes around the banana grove, saw them. With an exclamation he jumped to his feet.

"What's the matter?" asked Sam.

"There are two men coming this way!" he replied excitedly.

Sam and Florence jumped to their feet and looked. The girl's eyes immediately recognized one of the newcomers as her father. With a cry of joy she ran toward him. Mr. Strong soon saw her, and he rushed to meet her with a heart overflowing with happiness.

In a few moments they were in each other's arms. Explanations followed, and the girl introduced the boys to her father. Mr. Strong thanked them for the care they had extended to his child, and particularly thanked Dick for risking his life in Florence's behalf. There was no reason for remaining on the key now, so the whole party embarked in the boat, the boys not forgetting to take their boxes of treasure with them. Everything else was left in the hut for the benefit of whoever happened to land there subsequently.

The schooner immediately sailed for Nassau, and reached that town on the following afternoon where they went to a hotel with the money boxes, the contents of which had been confidentially explained to Mr. Strong, who promised to attend to their shipment to the United States by the same steamer on which they would go themselves. In due time the party reached New York. Mr. Strong got the money boxes through the custom house, and sold the coin to the government for its intrinsic value. He received a check for \$110,000, which was divided as follows: \$50,000 each to Dick and Sam, and \$10,000 to Florence. As Dick was fearful that his stepfather, as his guardian, would take charge of the money by a court order, he handed his share over to Mr. Strong to invest for him.

This precaution proved unnecessary, for Dick presently learned that his mother's husband had died during his absence, leaving his estate equally divided between his stepson and his only sister. Dick then asked Mr. Strong to act as guardian until he reached his majority, and the gentleman gladly undertook the responsibility. Dick and Sam then went to an academy that proved more congenial to their tastes than Dr. Titus' school, and when they graduated therefrom they went into a business partnership together.

A year after Dick and Florence were married, with Sam as best man. All this happened many years ago, and to-day Dick and Sam are in their forties. They live in handsome homes, near together, in Mount Vernon, and never a week passes but they dine at one another's house. Each has his private den in a certain part of his house, and here they like to smoke their after-dinner cigars together and talk business. Sometimes their minds go back to the days of their boyhood, and then they find a peculiar pleasure in living over again the time when they were lost in the tropics.

Read "THE SILENT BROKERS; OR, THE BOY WHO BROKE THE WALL STREET SYNDICATE."

"If you stand with your back to the south, what have you on your left hand?" asked the teacher during the geography lesson. The small boy thought, considered his hands, and gave the right answer. "Fingers, sir," he replied.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

ISLAND OF NEVIS

The islands of Nevis and St. Thomas are not the same. They are separate units of the West Indies. Most authorities agree that Alexander Hamilton was born on the former.

COTTON A TRUE "MINE"

If you want to find an extensive conglomeration of minerals, pick up a cotton plant. It contains iron, phosphorus, magnesium, calcium, potassium and sodium, and, Dr. McHargue, of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station has just shown, also copper, manganese and zinc.

WINE, BEER AND BRANDY IN NOAH'S ARK CARGO

Beer and wine made up part of Noah's cargo on the ark.

This was revealed, speakers before the American Oriental Society said recently, through the translation of a tablet found in Nineveh by George Smith of the British Museum and restored by Paul Haupt, Professor of Assyriology at Johns Hopkins University.

Professor Haupt told members of the Oriental Society that the flood table was found in 1872. It had been deciphered previously by other Assyriologists, but the speaker said his recent translation was more comprehensive.

Professor Haupt's translation relates how Noah cut down trees in the jungle and laid the frame of his ark, which consisted of six decks, divided into seven compartments. After its cargo was taken aboard, Professor Haupt said, "two-thirds of the ark was under water."

"For our food," read Professor Haupt's translation of the tablet, "I slaughtered oxen and killed sheep—day by day. With beer and brandy, oil and wine I filled large jars, as with the water of a river."

OLIVER BALDWIN, PREMIER'S SON, A SPIRITIST; SAYS DEAD TALKED TO HIM IN FIVE TONGUES

At a brotherhood meeting at Birmingham recently, a dispatch from that city to The Westminster Gazette says, the Prime Minister's Socialist son, Oliver Baldwin, pronounced himself a Spiritist.

He asserted he had talked with dead relatives and had heard spirit voices coming from all parts of the room in no fewer than five languages.

It was not until he was convinced of spiritism, he declared, that he found life worth living.

Oliver Baldwin has said "the war was my school." He enlisted in the British Army when only 17 and saw service in France until his demobilization in 1919. Then he went to Egypt, where he was an instructor in the Armenian Army in Transcaucasia.

These experiences are dealt with in a book entitled "Six Prisons and Two Revolutions," published last year. In this he referred to "my country's betrayal of Armenia," gave his views on national and international problems and recounted amusing and exciting personal adventures.

He has taken part in election campaigns against his father, the Premier, speaking on behalf of Labor Party candidates. In 1924 he himself unsuccessfully contested a constituency at Dudley. In his speeches he has said that his father's Government does nothing "save twiddle their fingers."

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT YOUR WATCH

Open your watch and look at the little wheels, springs and screws, each an indispensable part of the whole wonderful machine. Notice the busy little balance wheel as it flies to and fro unceasingly, day and night, year in and year out. This wonderful little machine is the result of hundreds of years of study and experiment. The watch carried by the average man is composed of ninety-eight pieces, and its manufacture embraces more than two thousand distinct and separate operations. Some of the smallest screws are so minute that the unaided eye cannot distinguish them from steel filings or specks of dirt. Under a powerful magnifying glass a perfect screw is revealed.

The slit in the head is 2-1,000ths of an inch wide. It takes 308,000 of these screws to weigh a pound, and a pound is worth \$1,585. The hair-spring is a strip of the finest steel about 9 1-2 inches long, 1-100th inch wide and 27-10,000ths inch thick. It is coiled up in a spiral form and finely tempered. The process of tempering these springs was long held as a secret by the few fortunate ones possessing it, and even now is not generally known. Their manufacture requires great skill and care. The strip is gauged to 20-1,000ths of an inch, but no measuring instrument has as yet been devised capable of fine enough gauging to determine beforehand by the size of the strip what the strength of the finished spring will be. A 20-1,000th part of an inch difference in the thickness of the strip makes a difference in the running of a watch of about six minutes per hour.

The value of these springs, when finished and placed in watches, is enormous in proportion to the material from which they are made. A comparison will give a good idea. A ton of steel made up into hairsprings when in watches is worth more than twelve and one-half times the value of the same weight in pure gold. Hairspring wire weighs one-twentieth of a grain to an inch. One mile of wire weighs less than half a pound. The balance gives five vibrations every second, 300 every minute, 18,000 every hour, 432,000 every day, and 157,680,000 every year. At each vibration it rotates about one and one-fourth times, which makes 197,100,000 revolutions every year. In order that we may better understand the stupendous amount of labor performed by these tiny works, let us make a few comparisons. Take, for illustration, a locomotive with six-foot driving-wheels. Let its wheels be run until they have been given the same number of revolutions that a watch does in one year, and they will have covered a distance equal to twenty-eight complete circuits of the earth. All this a watch does without other attention than winding once every twenty-four hours.

WILL, THE WAGON BOY

or, The Diamonds that Came by Express

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XXII.—Ben Bolton Calls on Mr. Bum.

"You gave them to me when I asked you for them. The money I return to you. Put it carefully away. Shall I also return the stone?"

"No," said Will. "Keep it. Something tells me that it rightfully belongs to you," and if it had been to save his life he could have made no other reply. He seemed utterly helpless in the hands of this man.

"Thank you," was the reply. "In the name of Dr. Pajaro I thank you. For myself I also thank you and in the name of the people of Ghorgee. Take your last look at the diamond, for you will never see it again."

And as Will looked at the glittering stone it seemed to fade away from the hand of the Hindu, and everything else faded with it.

Once, more as far as consciousness was concerned there was no such being on earth as Will Walker. Will had been hypnotized again.

But he was sitting on the chair just the same, staring at the Hindu. Behind him was Mr. Bum, who was making a quick pass before his face.

The doctor's brother arose and opened the door.

Mr. Bum stood aside to let him pass.

Mr. Bum extended his hands with a profound salaam.

"Have they come?" asked Dr. Pajaro's double.

"Not yet, most illustrious Rajah," was the reply.

"It is well. Here is the boy. Use him as they desire. Be prepared for the end. No matter what it may be, no harm shall come to you—that I swear."

He glided from the room, and hurrying down the stairs left the house by the side door just one moment before Detective Ben Bolton and his companions entered the saloon.

There was some swearing done, and some little searching, Ben returning on his tracks.

It was a hopeless case, though.

For the first time the thought entered Ben Bolton's brain that Will himself might be the person who had taken the Great Ghorgee from out of the rubbish pile.

Bitterly he upbraided himself for not having searched the boy, but it was too late now.

Examiner Daycock, who as yet had not the faintest idea where he was being taken, grew impatient under the delay.

"What a lot of fuss about that nigger boy," he said. "Why don't you let him go and walk ahead? I don't know what the deuce you are driving at, but whatever it is I want to see the end of it?"

"The boy is necessary to the whole business. It can't be done without him, I am afraid," growled Ben Bolton.

"I say let it go," put in Nellie Tighe, offering objection for the first time. "Let's get down to real business, and——"

"No!" broke in Ben. "I am determined to see my scheme through. What does the value of the other diamonds amount to compared with the Great Ghorgee?"

"You can never sell it," sneered Daycock. "You will find yourself in the soup in two shakes if you offered it on the Lane."

"It can be taken to Holland and cut up, though," replied Ben, quickly, "and that's what I propose to do with it."

"And my share of the profits is to be sent to me by express, I don't think," muttered the examiner.

"Trust me and come on. We'll get it yet," returned Ben, hurriedly, and they turned down Morris street then.

If he had left any doubts on the subject before, Examiner Daycock now knew that he was in the hands of a pair of crooks, who were ready and willing to sacrifice the fairly good reputation they had earned as detectives for gain.

And strange it is, and as true as it is strange, that where men and women will go on being honest for years so far as money is concerned, when it comes to diamonds their heads are quickly turned. And so it came about that Detective Ben Bolton and his companions turned up at Mr. Bum's minus Will, the wagon boy, little dreaming that Will was even then already in the house.

Mr. Bum was behind his bar, and there were but few people in the saloon, all being Hindu sailors, who scarcely looked up when the party entered.

"Ah, it is you again," said the old Hindu, as Ben Bolton walked up to the bar with that masterful air which the true New York detective of the lower grade knows so well how to assume.

To Mr. Bum this air of insolent assurance meant:

"You do as I want you to do or I'll have your place pulled."

"It's me again, Bum," replied Ben. "I told you I would come. Are you ready to help me out?"

"Vere is de boy?" asked the old man, looking around. "I do not see him."

"Never mind about the boy. We can do just as well without him, I guess."

Mr. Bum shrugged his shoulders.

"I do not know," he said. "I t'ink it was better as we had de boy."

"Well, you can't get him—see?" said Ben, "and the game has got to be tried all the same, or I'll make it hot for you. I s'pose you know how much it is worth to you to keep on the right side of the police better than I can tell you, old man."

"Hush!" breathed the Hindu. "Speak not of it here. Dese people are low caste. Dey know not of such tings. Follow me," and he led the way upstairs into the room where Will's mysterious seance had taken place.

Examiner Daycock, cool, calculating, hard-headed Custom House officer that he was, grew more mystified than ever.

If he had dared to hold out against the detective he would never have entered the place, but for once this man who had long been the terror of the diamond importers of New York, found himself thoroughly cowed.

"For heaven sake, what do you expect to gain by bringing me to this hole?" he whispered to Ben, as they passed through the dark passage and up the stairs.

"Silence!" breathed Ben. "You'll do as I tell you, Mr. Man, that's all."

Ben Bolton, who had in his youth been a sailor, had made two voyages to India.

Although he had never personally witnessed the strange doing of the Hindu fakirs, he had heard much about them, and was a firm believer in their wonderful powers.

Thus Will's story had appealed to the detective strongly.

He felt that if Dr. Pajaro had been able to learn so much by this strange method he might be able to learn more, and to locate the Great Ghorgee.

"Now, sahib," said Mr. Bum, "what do you wish me to do? You tell me that Dr. Pajaro sent you before you do come here. Alas! I now know that it is one lie you tell me, for Dr. Pajaro is dead."

"Who told you that?" demanded Ben, fiercely.

"It matters not. We Hindus in New York are not so many but what we know all that goes on among us. Yes, he is dead. What then? All must die. If cannot be helped, so."

"Cut all that out," said Ben, fiercely. "What I want is your help in the way I told you, and I want it right now. I was not able to bring the boy Dr. Pajaro used. Can't you do without him? If you are as much of a fakir as you profess to be I should think you would be able to do the trick alone."

"No, sahib; not alone. But I have with me another boy who may do for us. I am willing to try, but how about my pay?"

"Ah! You are after the dollars, are you?" mused Ben.

"And why not? Do you catch thieves for nothing? I think no—not much. Sure, I am after dollars every time."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what I will do for you," said Ben. "If you show me what I want to know by this magic of yours, or hypnotism or whatever you have a mind to call it, I'll give you ten dollars—so there."

"No," said Mr. Bum, shaking his head. "Not at all for ten dollars. Give me ten dollars now, and I'll do it. If I succeed den twenty-five dollars more, if I fail, nothing at all."

"Done," said Ben, who was growing anxious over the delay. "Here's the ten; now trot out your boy."

Mr. Bum accepted the money and retiring from the room returned in a moment leading a form enveloped in a richly embroidered Oriental cloak which reached almost to the floor.

Apparently it was a Hindu, if the brown color of the hands told anything, but the head was covered by a black silk cap which had been drawn down over it so that nothing could be seen but two shining eyes looking out at Ben Bolton and his companions.

"Sahib," said Mr. Bum, waving his hand. "here

is the boy. Now we will see what we can do to help you to find the Great Ghorgee."

CHAPTER XXIII.—Strange Doings at Mr. Bum's.

Ben Bolton stared at the old Hindu in amazement.

"Who told you what I was after?" he demanded, fiercely. "What do you mean by the Great Ghorgee?"

"Ah, sahib," replied Mr. Bum, "it is quite useless for you to try to deceive me. I am a fakir. I can read your mind as you would read a book. It is the great diamond you are after, and to me thirty-five dollars you will give. Cheap! Too cheap!"

"Get down to business," growled the detective. "Don't make any more talk."

"Oh, yes," sneered the Hindu, and again he left the room.

Nellie drew away from the masked figure with every sign of fear.

"I don't like this for a cent, Ben," she whispered. "I wish you would cut it out."

"Same with me," added Daycock. "I didn't suppose there was a detective in New York soft enough to believe in any such rubbish."

"You'll keep your remarks to yourself, my friend," growled Ben. "I know my business. If you start in to interfere with me you stand a glorious chance of finding yourself in the soup."

The entrance of Mr. Bum put an end to further discussion.

He carried in his hand the brass-tripod which Will had described.

Ben recognized it as being of Hindu make, and his hopes rose high, for he had absolute confidence in the powers of the Hindu fakirs.

Mr. Bum went about the business in rather a different way than before.

There was no stripping of clothes on this occasion.

He made Ben, Nellie and Daycock join hands around the tripod.

Inside the circle he took his own place, and also moved the masked boy, whom it is hardly necessary to say was Will.

The wagon boy was entirely unconscious of his surroundings. Unknow to himself, Mr. Bum stood behind him while Dr. Pajaro's double did the talking. It was he who had hypnotized the boy this time, and he now held him subject to his will.

This time Will was to talk without knowing what he was talking about.

As it had been ever since he took that fatal package of diamonds into his wagon, he was to be a passive tool in the hands of others.

It was but another link in this strange chain of events, the end of which was now close at hand.

Mr. Bum now threw his liquids and his powders into the bowl, and started up the flame.

Will was not utterly unconscious.

He had a general idea of his surrounding, but strange to say he was unconscious of the presence of any one but Mr. Bum.

He could see the flames shooting up from the

bronze dish, and he knew what was expected of him when the order came to tell of the pictures in the light.

This was after the fakir had played a melancholy dirge upon his flageolet for fully fifteen minutes.

"Tell! Tell!" he said in low, earnest tones. "Tell what you see! Tell of the pictures in the light."

All this time the fakir's audience had been attentively watching the flames in the bronze dish.

Ben Bolton was nervously anxious. Examiner Daycock regarded the leaping fire with a skeptical sneer, and once he whispered to Ben that it was "all blame nonsense," only to be angrily ordered to "shut up." But Nellie Tighe had all she could do to keep awake and this in spite of a deep sense of fear which began to creep over her. That the woman was half hypnotized herself there can be little doubt.

Then Will began to talk! amid those strange surroundings his voice sounded to all like the voice of one speaking far away. It is probable that the fakir intended this to be so, and that this peculiar effect was also due to the exercise of his powerful will.

"I see diamonds!" said Will, speaking in low, measured tones. "Oh, how they sparkle and glitter. They lie in open papers upon a table. A man is looking at them with a magnifying glass. He is the man who stands behind me now."

"I see a room—it is a vacant room. There is no furniture in it—I think it is an office—here stand two men. They are waiting—waiting. What are they waiting for? I don't know. One is Dr. Pajaro, the other is a small man. He is afraid. He has red hair and a crooked nose. He is trembling with fear, but Dr. Pajaro passes his hands before his face to quiet him, and they listen—they hear a step on the stairs."

"Tom Rankin, by thunder!" muttered Daycock, mentioning the name of one of his fellow examiners at the Public Stores, whose business it was, as Joe Martin had confessed, to have sealed up the diamond package, and which, as we know, was not done.

"Shut up!" breathed Ben, and Will went right on with his description of the pictures in the light.

"I see a boy; he wears a blue cap; it has 'Allen's Express' on it in gilt letters; he is coming up the stairs; he enters an office opposite to the one in which Dr. Pajaro and the red-headed man are. He has the diamonds. They are wrapped in paper. He gives the paper to an old man and goes away. I see a man. He is standing in the hall in the shadow. The boy passes him, but does not see him. He listens at the door of the room where Dr. Pajaro and the red-headed man are. They are trying to open the door, but they can't for the man has locked it. Where did he get the key? I see this man move across the hall to the other door. Here he listens. Now he opens it and goes in. The old man stands there facing him. He has not the diamonds. I think he has hidden them. Yes, I see them now. They are in the chimney behind a piece of old paper. The man who has come in wants them. I seem to hear him talking. He says he is from the Custom House, and that he must have the

diamonds, but the old man says no, no. He is angry. He turns away—he sits down in his chair. He thinks the man has gone, but he has not. Ah! What is this? Murder! The man creeps up behind him. He has picked up the poker by the stove, he strikes the old man and kills him! This is terrible. All is dark now. I can see no more. But I know this man—this murderer. He stands behind me now."

"Great heavens! What—what——"

With a gasping cry Examiner Daycock pulled away from Ben and Nellie, and made for the door.

"Hold!" cried Ben, whipping out his revolver. "One step more and I fire. Listen, Daycock! You are the murderer of Karl Kutter! I suspected it from the first. Fool! Why did you delay in the hall? Why did you give him time to hide the diamonds! But that's always the way with you fellows. Don't you move, man; if you do the next step will be your last!"

"It's all rubbish!" panted the examiner. "It's all a lie! Why should this farce be continued. Come out of this and I'll do as I told you I would. There is nothing to be gained here."

"Back!" cried Ben, sternly. "If you want to save your neck you tie to me. Back to your place, man. What we want is the big diamond, which you didn't get—the Great Ghorgee!"

Trembling from head to foot, the examiner stepped back near the tripod, but he did not take Ben's hand nor Nellie's, for at this moment Mr. Bum spoke in a perfectly calm voice.

"Quiet all," he said. "We are not through yet. Speak boy! Tell of the pictures in the light."

"I see diamonds!" continued Will. "They are wrapped in paper, many of them; some are small and some are large."

"Come," muttered Ben, "we are getting down to it now."

"It is dark," continued Will, paying no attention to the interruption. "Where am I—oh, I know. I am in a pocket. It is the pocket of this man behind me. He has the diamonds!"

"Awake!" cried Mr. Bum, springing up and making quick passes over Will.

"All over, gentlemen!" he hastily added. "My money, if you please."

Ben Bolton had raised his revolver. Daycock backed against the wall, and the Hindu glided to his side.

"No murder must be done here!" he cried. "I will not allow it. Hold your man! I will get the diamonds!"

Quick as lightning he raised his hands and began making passes before Daycock's face.

"Sleep," he cried. "Sleep!"

The light in the burning dish red up brighter, the eyes of the terrified man were fixed upon those of the fakir, his face had assumed an expression of horror.

"Ah! I see him! Take him away!" he suddenly yelled. "Take him away! He is Karl Kutter! I killed him, he will kill me."

He dropped to the floor like a log, and in the same breath Mr. Bum sprang to the tripod and kicked it over. In an instant the room was in darkness, for on this occasion Mr. Bum, after drawing the heavy curtains before the windows, had not lighted the hanging lamp.

(To be continued.)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Will Rogers, who is touring Europe making literary and social calls on the Prince of Wales, King of England; Mussolini, Von Hindenburg, the Pope and the King of Spain, cabled Florenz Ziegfeld lately that he is leaving for Moscow, Russia, to investigate a report that the Charleston dance originated there.

FIRST TANK CAR WITH MILK FOR NEW YORK ARRIVES

The first tank car to bring milk into New York City recently arrived in the Lackawanna Railroad yards in Jersey City. It is lined with glass, covered with cork and built of steel plates three-eighths of an inch thick. The car has a capacity of 6,000 gallons.

INVISIBLE TYPEWRITING

My boss telephoned that he would not be in the office until later in the day. I started reading a magazine instead of doing some typewriting. I became engrossed in the magazine and when I heard the boss greet the other workers in the office, I started typing anything that came into my head. He came over beside me and said, "I'm glad to see you so busy, but why don't you put some paper in your machine?"

DEAD HEATS IN AMERICA RARE OWING TO NUMBER OF JUDGES

While they are of every-day occurrence on the English and Continental course, dead heats are comparatively rare on American race tracks because of the employment of two or more placing judges. Last year there were two dead heats at Havana and at Long Branch. In 1924 there also were two, both at Youngstown, Ohio. There were two in 1923, one at Saratoga and one at Latonia, the former being between Missionary and Deadlock on July 31. Old-timers recall the dead heat at Aqueduct just twenty years ago, in the tenth running of the Hudson Stakes for two-year-olds, Arbuckle and George Kessler being the principals.

MAMMOTH, 20,000 YEARS IN ICE, FOUND NEAR SIBERIAN RIVER.

The frozen body of a mammoth, preserved from decay by ice, has been found by Professor Petaff, of the Leningrad Academy of Science, on the bank of the River Amur in Eastern Siberia.

The professor estimates it is from 20,000 to 30,000 years old and hopes to arrange to transport the skin and the skeleton to Leningrad so that a facsimile from life can be exhibited in the Museum.

Only two bodies of mammoths have been discovered, the first on the Lena River in northeast Siberia, in 1729, which had been partly devoured by wolves and bears. The second also was found in northern Siberia, about twenty-five years ago.

The skeleton of the first is now in the Leningrad Paleontological Museum. When the second mammoth was discovered, scientists tasted the 20,000-year old steaks and found the meat fresh, but rather strong in flavor. The air still remaining in the lungs showed no chemical difference from the air of today.

LAUGHS

Pedestrian—Seen Brown lately? Motorist—Ya-as, deah boy. Ran across him the other day.

Ikey—Fadder, vat is a Bohemian? Ikey's Father—A Bohemian, Ikey, is von who will take you out to dinner if you vill lend him five dollars.

Edith (conceited)—I suppose a lot of men will be made miserable when I marry. Marie—Why, how many men are you going to marry?

"You can't believe everything you read." "No," replied Farmer Cornloss. "I never yet saw an almanac that was as reliable on the weather as it is on dates."

Tourist—Is the London fog really so awfully heavy? Londoner—Terrible. Tourist—How do the vehicles get through? Londoner—Well, the first one makes a tunnel which all the following ones pass through.

"Josh," said Farmer Wilkins to his son, "I wish, if you don't mind, you'd eat off by yourself instead of with the summer boarders." "Ain't my society good enough for 'em?" "Your society is all right, but your appetite sets a terrible example."

The mayor of a far inland town was about to engage a preacher for the new church. "Parson, ye aren't by any chance a Baptist, be ye?" "No, not necessarily. Why?" "Wal, I was just-a goin' to say we have to haul our water twelve miles."

Grandmother had come to visit her son, the pastor, and Mary, her 5-year-old granddaughter, was entertaining her with the story of a wonderful dog. Mary—and the dog flew and f-l-e-w and f-l-e-w away up into the sky. Grandmother (reprovingly)—Now Mary, tell it right; you know a dog can't fly. Mary (triumphantly)—Oh, yes, grandmother that dog could fly; it was a bird dog.

THE FROZEN WORLD

"All aboard!"

The day was warm and sultry, and I had been strolling along the river front in quest of a few mouthfuls of fresh air when I heard the cry of "all aboard!"

One of the Staten Island boats was about to leave.

On the impulse of the moment I boarded her, and after a delightful sail down the bay I went ashore at Sailors' Snug Harbor, where is situated the home of aged, worn-out seamen.

I had often visited the "Home," and was known to most of the tars, with many of whom I had shared my last paper of fine cut.

"How are you, Ben?" I cheerfully asked, as I came across an old fellow on crutches.

Ben had the reputation—not undeservedly gained, either—of being a crabbed and silent man. On learning from the others that Ben had had a most adventuresome life, I had many a time attempted drawing him into spinning a yarn, but always in vain.

On my previous visit to the "Home" I had given the old fellow a stick of genuine "black pig-tail," and it will be seen that to this little present I, and you who are readers are indebted for the relation of this true and thrilling tale.

"How are you, Ben?" I had asked.

The old tar's head was sulkily hung, and I thought he intended to pass me without speaking, as if he neither saw me nor knew that I had addressed him.

Then I chanced to observe that Ben was engaged in taking a sly glance at me from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

To my surprise his face lighted up presently, his head was raised, and one hand went respectfully to his hair.

"How-de-do, capen? I wasn't 'xpectin' o' you athwart my howse. Glad to see you, and—that was might good pig-tail."

This last was said most eloquently, and I saw Ben's tongue begin to roam about in his cheek to see if, perchance, a solacing quid of the same was not there then.

"I'm glad you liked it. You shall have some more."

"When?" he said, eagerly.

"I'll get it as soon as I go to the city, and you shall have it by tomorrow at the latest."

Again Ben's hand went up, and seeing in him a disposition to talk, I sat myself down on a bench beside him.

"You've seen some startling things in your life, Ben," I suggested, to draw him out.

"Yes—yes, so I have," he said, thoughtfully. "I've been shipwrecked five times—once among the cannibals. I've been nearly roasted to death in the tropics and frozen to death at the North Pole."

"The North Pole! Surely you were never there?"

"Not quite, but very close to it. Like to hear about it?"

"Of course. Fire ahead, and if it's a good yarn I'll keep you in pig-tail for a six-month."

"Well," began Ben—"well, the way it happened was this: I was like most boys, wild to go to sea, thinking it was all pleasure and no work.

"That I was sadly mistaken you may well imagine.

"I had been attending school, and was said to be a smart scholar, and that I would some day make my mark in the world. Perhaps I would, had not my mind been filled with thoughts of the sea.

"To make a long story short, I ran away, going to sea on a whaler. I was gone three years, returning to find my mother dead, my father married again, and so influenced by his second wife that he showed little affection for me, the only child of his first wife.

"So I became a sailor in earnest from that time.

"But to the story proper.

"The *Nantucket*, whaler, was a stanch, good ship, commanded by Captain Douglas, a smart book seaman, tolerably fair practical seaman, and of an ambitious turn of mind.

"We were well up on the coast of Greenland by mid-summer, and had the good fortune to fall in with a drove of right whales, so that in an incredibly short time we had taken in almost a full cargo.

"After that came a streak of bad luck, and a week or ten days passed without our getting a scent of a whale. During this time we had been gradually working further north, up through Davis' Strait.

"Three days later the wind chopped around to a different quarter and blew cold and keen, and the clear blue water we had been dashing aside from our bows in showers of spray in six hours had a coating of ice of several inches in thickness.

"The captain's brow was clouded with anxiety now, but no man among us uttered an accusing word, nor did we to the bitter end, though it cost many of us our lives.

"In twenty-four hours more the *Nantucket* was a prisoner.

"But a gleam of hope brightened the dull clouds of despair when, of a sudden the ice field cracked and separated, leaving before us a narrow but nearly straight channel trending southwest.

"We made sail at once, but in a very few hours the ice again began to check our way. The vessel's bows and the rigging were coated thick with ice, as also the decks were rapidly becoming, and tough tars though we were, to a man we were compelled to run to the galley to warm ourselves after an exposure of less than ten minutes to the keen Arctic winds.

"Then the darkness of gloom was seen on every face, and all foreboded the worst.

"And the worst came, and speedily at that.

"Exactly how it happened no man could ever tell, but suddenly, with an almost human shriek, the *Nantucket's* ribs were crushed in, and water at once poured into her hold and there froze into solid ice in the course of a few hours, the vessel's bulge forming a lever to support her for the present.

"Then we saw what a man Douglas was when misfortune came.

"We must bestir ourselves, boys," he said. "It

is cold now, but it will be colder before long. We must get off the vessel and put up some sort of shelter in the lee of that big hummock or young glacier yonder.'

"Working in relays, we began to excavate a big hole in the glacier, for such it was, and the sides of this we covered with boards, and rags, and furs, and blankets. The entrance we closed up by piling big, square blocks of ice one upon another, having a small hole of about three feet by two for an entrance, so that to get inside it was necessary to go down on hands and knees.

"This entrance we guarded by overturning the long boat in front of it. This done, we all set to work to provision the place, and soon had conveyed thither all the loose stores. But much of the ship's provisions had been stored in the lower hold, which had been filled with water, covering the casks, which were now embedded in ice as firm as rock.

"We were preparing to cut into the ice when we were warned by a storm that it was time to think of getting into our shelter, so, unshipping the galley stove, we carried that to our house and busied ourselves until the last minute in collecting fuel.

"Such a storm!—pew!—I remember to this day as plainly as I did then. It lasted seven days, and when it ceased the long arctic night had closed in.

"How the days and weeks passed after that goodness only knows, for I do not. All is a blank, save for several incidents.

"Scurvy broke out!

"You can picture what followed.

"In two weeks only ten of the *Nantucket's* crew were living and the captain was not among them. As they died we would crawl forth at the risk of our lives and bury them in the snow. I say at the risk of our lives, for one poor fellow was frozen to death, though he was absent from the house only a few minutes.

"We were then but nine in number, and I, the boatswain, was the only officer left.

"Four more died before the return of day.

"Perhaps the horror of these last four deaths had an influence on us which saved the lives of us five, for it made us very careful how and what we ate, and induced me to take all the exercise possible.

"Day came at last.

"It was only a few minutes' duration, but to us it was a sign of glorious promise.

"Our provisions and fuel by this time were run very low, and we all were on the watch for the next breaking of the darkness to see about the *Nantucket*, for she would supply both by exerting ourselves.

"Day came again, and with it the disagreeable knowledge that the *Nantucket* was—gone!

"How or where she went we never knew, but judged that the ice had opened and she had been swallowed up.

"Three awful days dragged their weary length. Living on a starvation allowance for weeks before, we were easy victims to hunger, and more rapidly than one would suppose did our strength desert us.

"Day dawned again, and I once more crawled forth on my hopeless errand, praying as I went

that God in mercy would deliver us from our strait.

"That prayer was heard and answered, for I had not gone a dozen feet from the door when I saw before me an immense polar bear. Seemingly as much startled as myself, the animal began to retreat.

"He led me a chase of nearly a quarter of a mile, when apparently thinking he was acting a cowardly part, he suddenly turned and prepared to give fight at a juncture when I had arrived too close to take flight in my turn.

"I could feel the color leave my cheeks, could feel my knees trembling beneath me; but there was no help for it, and drawing my knife I prepared for the battle.

"It was a fearful struggle, and more than once did I believe my last moment had come. At last the climax came, and I located the brute's heart and struck.

"When I drew out my knife a stream of blood gushed in its wake, and with glazing eyes the bear fell. I had plunged my knife into his heart.

"I hurried back to the house for assistance, but night came before we were ready to go, and we had to wait for day's coming. Light was yet two hours distant when Benson awoke me, saying:

"Don't it feel warmer to you?"

"Yes, but it's only fancy,' I said, but I changed my mind when I went out after daylight came.

"There was a warm breeze from the south, and it was like an April day in New York.

"The ice began to break up fast now, and Ned and I hurried on. Suddenly, rising a little ascent, we came upon the bear, lying as I had left her, but upon her body were her two half-grown cubs, who growled at us most viciously and showed fight.

"A shout called our attention, and some distance away we saw our companions in the long boat, and the latter in her native element.

"But my yarn is growing long, and I will haul a little closer to the wind.

"We killed the cubs, and thus were supplied with provisions anew. Having cut up the bear, we made sail in the long boat, and went South as fast as we could.

"Providence favored us, and we five escaped with our lives, being picked up finally by a whaler."

DESPISED FISH PUT TO USE

The little pink-hued pilchard, which for years has swarmed in untold millions off the West coast of Vancouver Island, is today British Columbia's Cinderella fish and the foundation of a prosperous new industry.

Until recently the pilchard was despised by fishermen. It was regarded as too oily for food, but far-sighted cannery operators believed in the opportunities presented by utilizing the pilchard for fish meal and oil.

Stations previously devoted to the handling of whales have been converted to Pilchard reduction works. Fish meal and oil are being produced in vast quantities and are finding an almost inexhaustible market.

Rattlesnake Farm In Texas

Snake farming is not so bad a business as one might suppose. F. B. Armstrong of Brownsville, Texas, has been at it for twenty-five years and has made big money by it.

He handles and raises the most venomous reptiles known to the Southwest and Mexico. Rattlesnakes are his specialty. He handles thousands of them in the course of a year.

Snake farming is in a class by itself. Mr. Armstrong has no competition in the business. Practically all the rattlesnakes and other reptiles peculiar to this region which are found in the museums, circuses, side shows and public parks of the United States and Europe are furnished by him.

He also does a good business with snake charmers. He sells the snakes by the pound, receiving all the way from 50 cents to \$1 a pound, according to quality and variety.

The snake farm is situated just outside of Brownsville. It embraces about twenty acres of ground and is surrounded by a strong, tight fence.

Upon a slight elevation within the main enclosure are the pens or corrals where the dangerous varieties are kept. Although this is the dull season at the farm, there are more than five hundred rattlesnakes in one pen.

The pen is formed by building a tight board fence about fifteen feet high. The fence has no opening and the pen is entered by a ladder.

Twelve species of poisonous snakes are known in Texas and Mexico. These are the harlequin, the cottonmouth, the copperhead, the Gulf coast massauga, Edward's massasauga, the ground rattlesnake, the banded rattlesnake, the dog-faced rattlesnake, the prairie rattlesnake and the green rattlesnake. These snakes, with the exception of the harlequin, are all known by a peculiar mark in the form of a pit in the skin of the upper jaw, between the eye and the nostril, and forming a triangle with the nostril, the eye and the pit for the three corners.

Mr. Armstrong has had specimens of nearly all kinds of poisonous snakes in the pens upon his farm. He keeps the snakes in the pens to fatten them. They bring better prices when fat, as he sells them by the pound.

Rats and mice are their principal food. The rodents are brought to Mr. Armstrong by Mexican boys, and are placed in the pens and the snakes do the rest. Having gorged themselves with the squealing, squirming rats and mice the snakes retire to the holes which they have made for themselves under the brush and lie there until the meal is digested.

The small inclosure keeps the snakes inactive and they fatten very rapidly. When in prime condition they are removed from the pen by means of a wire lasso hitched in a tight noose around their necks, just below their heads. They are placed in a box and removed to the operating shed.

It is in the operating shed that the poison and fangs are removed from the snakes. Mr. Arm-

strong takes from each rattlesnake from one to two tablespoonfuls of green, liquid poison.

In extracting the poison the snake is made to bite on a glass tumbler. The fangs dare forth and the poison is ejected into the glass. Then the fangs are removed.

There are from six to eight fangs in each snake. They are from one-fourth to one half inch long and are curved and as sharply pointed as a needle. In the end of each fang is a small hole through which the poison is ejected.

There are four fangs ready for use at all times. The remainder are in an undeveloped state and serve to take the place of the mature fangs should the latter be lost. Lastly the poison sack and glands are cut out. The whole process does not occupy more than five minutes. The reptile is then as harmless as a rabbit. While the operation is being carried on the snake's body is writhing continuously and its rattles keep up a constant buzzing.

When the process is finished the snake is ready for commercial use. It is said that there is not a snake in captivity which has not been made harmless in this manner.

"What do you do with the poison which you extract from the snake?" Mr. Armstrong was asked.

"I sell it to chemists and physicians throughout the country," he replied.

"What price do you get for it?"

"I am paid almost any price that I ask. It is such a rare product that it has so fixed value. It is used entirely for experimental purposes, such as making antitoxins. It is one of the most powerful known poisons, and in time it may be discovered that it is of great value as a medicinal product."

Mr. Armstrong's snakes are captured mostly by Mexicans. They receive from 25 cents to 50 cents a pound for them. By adding to their weight Mr. Armstrong is able to make a good profit on each snake.

There is a brisk demand for harmless snakes. Mr. Armstrong says that the harmless snakes are of much benefit to the country, being voracious eaters of rats, mice, gophers, moles, crickets, centipedes, tarantulas and other noxious insects.

The habits of the rattlesnakes form an interesting study. The Texas rattlesnake is particularly abundant in the Gulf coast region. It is stated that they enjoy the cool breezes from the ocean as much as the average visitors at a summer resort.

They are known to crawl to the edge of the water toward sundown in midsummer and enjoy the breeze and spray. They are quick to strike at a bird or any other animal that comes within their reach. The Mexican eagles and kingsnake are the principal foes of the rattlesnake. The eagle kills them for food.

Mrs. Jones of Reading had a Japanese servant who had a habit of trying to conceal from his mistress any breakage of dishes. She told him it was wicked to deceive and in the future to always tell her when he broke anything. One day, while she was entertaining some friends in the parlor, he suddenly appeared and said: "Mrs. Jones, you tell me when I break something to tell you. I break my pants."

CURRENT NEWS

RADIO DEVICE MAKES DEAF CHILDREN HEAR

Highly successful experiments have been made with a new apparatus for overcoming deafness, designed by a civil engineer of Hull, England, named Calvard, according to an official British despatch from Rugby, picked up by The World's wireless station.

More than 80 per cent of the children in a Hull deaf and dumb institution have heard speech and music for the first time as the result of the invention, which has the appearance of a small wireless receiving set without aerial or ground connection, the despatch said. The results are achieved by transmission of sound to the inner ear of deaf patients. It does not succeed with all sufferers, but only with a large proportion.

POLICE TAKE FEDERAL MEN FOR THIEVES, BREAK UP NARCOTIC RAID

What was planned as a narcotic raid on the quarters of the Chinese employed at the Century Country Club, Anderson Hills Road, Harrison, came to nought recently when the State police at White Plains were notified that the Chinese quarters were being held up.

The police found cars parked along the road near the club. They deflated the tires and surrounded the building in which the Federal officers were making their raid. Then they disarmed the federal officers. When they discovered who the "robbers" were it was too late for the narcotic raid to be effective.

Two weeks ago there was a robbery of the Chinese quarters, and the movements of the Federal officers made the watchman think another hold-up was taking place.

LIONS INVADE MARKET PLACE IN ITALY, TERRIFY CROWD

Two lions and three lionesses stalked from their cages in a circus today in Cremona, and appeared in the midst of the great weekly cattle market near the Venetian gate of the city. The busy market place, to which hundreds of farmers had brought their cattle, pigs and chickens, was suddenly the scene of a great panic.

One lion leaped at a man on horseback, but the animal kicked so vigorously that the jungle beast turned his attention to the cattle stalls, which were in a twinkling a terrified tangle of livestock and humans. Another pair attacked a fine team of oxen and partially devoured them before the horrified gaze of the few persons who remained in the vicinity.

One lioness, who had recently escaped and frightened a city farther North, soon became bored and returned to her cage, but another discovered a half-built house and trotted up to a balcony where she found a chicken coop. There she sat, enjoying the view and the poultry, until her tamers captured her.

A lioness named Elsa, reputed the fiercest in the menagerie, walked through the gas works gate and devoured the janitor's cat while the owner watched, leaped a wall, and landed among

the monks in a small Capuchin monastery. The startled monks fled from their cloister, but later managed to trap the beast in a cell.

Bands of Fascists soldiers, carbineers and firemen took part in a wild three-hour chase before the animals were safely locked up. Nobody was hurt, but an irate band of farmers swooped down on the circus owners with big claims for the damage to their cattle, pigs and chickens.

N. Y. SLEUTH GETS "LUCKY SHOOTER," SOLVES THRILLING MARBLE MYSTERY.

The mystery of Danny Gore's missing marble was solved recently by the New York police. For three days it has been agitating them, because—well, because it was the first big marble case they have had. The eyes of the whole marble-shooting world were fixed on them, and it would not have helped the police much to fall down on the job.

Of course, the police have been asked to find marbles before. But this one was a "lucky shooter." Of course, they have been asked to find "lucky shooters" now and then. But this one was the "lucky shooter" of Danny Gore, champion marble player of Springfield, Mass. No wonder the police pricked up their ears and started to work.

You see, Danny arrived in New York on his way to Atlantic City to play in the National Marbles Tournament. He and "Dutch" Robbins and John Kelly, who also are big men in the marble-shooting world, were guests at a matinee theatre party given by Richard C. Campbell, stock broker, of No. 50 West 42d Street. Danny left his "lucky shooter," which he was relying upon to make him national champion, in his host's car, a closed model, which was locked. When he came out his marble was gone, so were his "lucky" sweater and "lucky" corduroy pants. And here it was just the day before the national tournament.

Danny had to go on to Atlantic City, but the police promised to do all they could. And if they had felt like slacking, Danny's pleas from Atlantic City would have kept them working.

For two days, however, there was no clue to the whereabouts of the marble, although leaders of various marble circles were questioned thoroughly.

Then Detective George Ferguson of the West 47th Street Station emerged suddenly from a long and arduous search with Joseph Dinizzo, seventeen, of No. 353 West 43d Street, and all of Danny's "lucky" outfit.

Danny was notified by telegram just before he went to the ring in the semi-finals at Atlantic City, and his outfit was rushed to him by train. Heartened by the good news, Danny proceeded to shoot his way through two opponents into the finals.

Dinizzo was held in \$1,000 bail on a charge of larceny. Marble-shooters are said to have launched a campaign to have Detective Ferguson promoted. If he can find a marble, they argue, what chance would a great big bandit have?

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